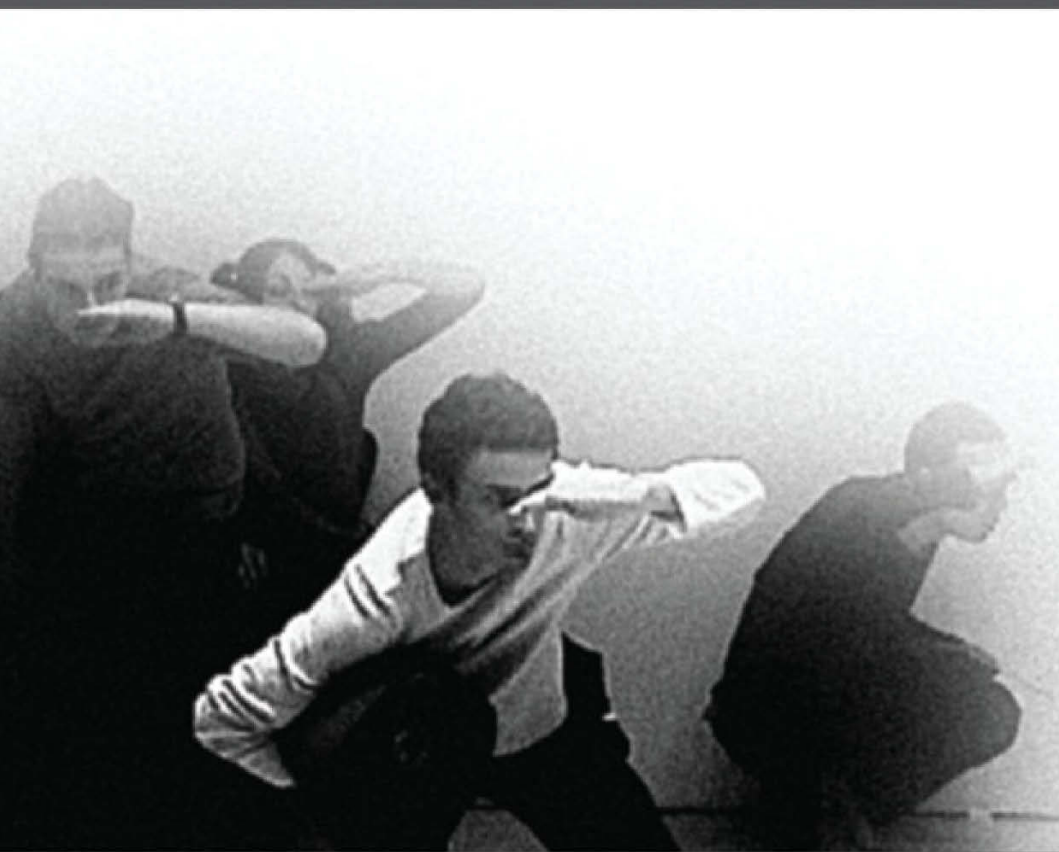


THEATRE, FACILITATION AND NATION FORMATION IN THE BALKANS AND MIDDLE EAST



Sonja Arsham Kuftinec

STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE
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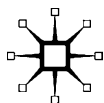
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Theatre, Facilitation, and Nation Formation in the Balkans and Middle East

Sonja Arsham Kuftinec

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*To my key partners in dialogue: Scot McElvany, Andy Arsham,
Wesley Days, and Chen Alon.*

*In memory of Shin Yasui who animated so many possibilities in
his too short life.*

*And for Meša Begić. I wanted you to improvise and be free, to
play with the people around you. You reminded me of theatre's
limits. Years later, you walked with me through Mostar, over the
new Old Bridge, and continued to question the relevance of all
that we did together. Did we really accomplish anything here?
This book strives to keep your questions alive...*

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Prologue

Books have a gestational journey distinct from the story told or the arguments mapped. The path that led to the events and thoughts detailed in the following pages traces aspects of my personal as well as professional genealogy, focused on the practice and scholarship of community-based performance. My father immigrated to the United States in 1960 from what was then known as Yugoslavia. My mother moved to the East Coast from the Deep South. Their sense of social identity, forged through the usual institutional structures, everyday interactions, commemorative state rituals, and signs of everyday nationalism, shifted after their encounter with each other, far from any particular nation-state. My parents met on a bare bones cruise ship traveling across the Atlantic Ocean. On board, they sat face to face for the first time, partnering for a card game. They met in a place of play, in a liminal location, and eventually resettled together in New England, in a territory foreign to both of them.

This temporary unsettling through partnership and play continues to mark my fascination with performance as a mode of encounter, community formation, and conflict transformation, which I explore in the pages to come. But I wonder what else I have inherited. What was passed down to me includes not only the stories, food, and songs of my ancestors, but also the social histories that shaped their capacity and drive to travel so far from what many would call home – from father land and mother tongue. In reflecting on my parents' dislocation, I recognize how familial ties to nation can naturalize an entity that is largely imagined and constructed as place-based, geographically stable, and linguistically coherent. This book, in part, addresses the violent consequences of eliding this recognition. Yet, recognizing the unstable and constructed nature of 'nation' does not eliminate the material-historical legacies I also inherit: of southern slavery and associated white privilege, of Croatian partisans and fascist Ustaša, of empire and dissolution, nationalism and diaspora.

The desire to investigate these legacies and their intersection with the stories of my husband – a secular Ashkenazi Jewish American – has infused another strand of the story that propels this book: the potential for theatre to provide an aesthetic, affective, and ethical space of encounter, particularly in zones of violent intergroup contestation.

I have written previously of some elements of that story in *Staging America*, a book that explores how Cornerstone Theater's community-based productions stage the complexities of social belonging in the United States. While working as a dramaturg with the company in Watts, Los Angeles, in 1994, I met a representative from Suncokret, a Croatian organization recruiting project facilitators to work in refugee and displacement camps in Croatia. I had been paying sporadic attention to the regional conflict up to this point: helping to organize a rally in graduate school and staging a classroom directing scene that grappled with my disconnection from the war. It is easy to remain only intermittently aware of a violence that is often mediated and always elsewhere. So, while I had grown up visiting my father's family in Yugoslavia, because of the increasing conflict, I had not been back since 1986. I returned as a theatre-maker who would later theorize the encounters I helped to facilitate. With support from Suncokret and Cornerstone, I stepped back into the Balkans.

Standing in the decaying backyard of my recently deceased grandfather's home, amongst the rotting plum and cherry trees, so much seemed suddenly past in the suddenly former Yugoslavia. The ruins created by a multi-fronted war seemed beyond reconstruction. Yet, I returned again and again over the next decade, drawn by a possibility and a question: could theatre help to re-member the Balkans? The region had been so rapidly dismembered, its people cut off from each other and from the recollection of a less-divisive past. Could performance suture this past, unsuppress historical narratives, and stitch together people's memories?

The idea seemed ludicrous to my father, who – though he had lived in the United States since 1960 – maintained a bluff authority about what Balkan people did and did not need. Topping my father's List of Things Balkan Youth Clearly Did Not Need in 1995 was theatre. But the ludicrous also suggests the power of the *ludic*, or playful place. Having just completed the residency in Watts with Cornerstone, I had seen the ludicrous succeed in a city riven by economic and social divisions, where African-American and Latino/a residents addressed and overcame at least some of their suspicions of the other through the process of theatrical creation.

As in Watts, the theatre I co-created in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia modeled various forms of reconciliation, offering young people of now antagonistic ethnoreligious identities a relatively safe forum for expressing public critique and animating new narratives of being together. I began to position these encounters within the

emerging framework of community-based theatre. But my practical experiences and later analysis also illuminated the limitations of the theatrical form. The recognition of these limitations grew more pronounced when in 2000 I was hired as a dialogue facilitator with Seeds of Peace, a US non-governmental organization that has, since 1993, brought together youth from the Middle East, Balkans, and South Asia. There I met my husband, a camp counselor, who unfolded for me his own developing consciousness of the multiple narratives that construct competing realities in the Middle East – what choreographer Liz Lerman productively terms ‘colliding truths’ (1992: 7). This notion of multiple truths that can knock against and potentially reshape each other refigures a conflict that is often framed as only two-sided. Thus, in addition to regenerating community formations in the Balkans, I began to consider whether theatre could mediate encounters between youth to affectively illuminate how truths collide rather than to stake out oppositional claims or resolve binary conflicts.

In fact, I have found in reflecting on a variety of theatrical meditations – in the Balkans, at Seeds of Peace camp in Maine, in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories – that these encounters can complicate the cheery rhetoric of ‘community-building’ and ‘conflict resolution’. Actions driven by ‘resolution’ can elide internal dissent, reduce the complexities of identity formation, and mute the dynamics of power and possession that often underlie ‘ethnic conflict’. The theatrical encounters I explore here more often highlight productive ruptures – moments of ‘truths colliding’ that undo the stability of what we think we know of ourselves and others. In *Postmodern Ethics* Zygmunt Bauman proposes that we come into knowledge not through naturalized and singular ‘understanding’, but through plural forms of misunderstandings (1993: 147). *Mis*-understandings offer the opportunities to examine assumptions, to reconstitute the world beyond ingroup and outgroup, beyond a nationalized (and naturalized) ‘us’ and ‘them’.

That said, I recognize that truth collisions and productive misunderstandings are not only mediated, but also experienced by the mediator. I have come up against several moments that render more visible and complicate my own self-assured ‘neutrality’. Those revelations often occur in their own in between spaces, outside of the formal process of rehearsal or facilitation. One such moment: At 2am after several vodka and oranges in the only operating bar in Varaždin, Croatia, my tongue loosens into the local language. Amra, a resident of the refugee camp in which I’m working, leans in to confide, ‘I thought you were above me. Now I see you with me’. Dwight Conquergood encouraged work in the embodied ‘thick

of things', striving to 'know how and who' rather than to only 'know about' (2002: 146). In the 'thick of things' I can see myself as others might, as one who sometimes plays down rather than with, writing about observations rather than through experience. With others, I can reorient myself. As the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas might put it, I come into my own being through face-to-face encounters,¹ whether the face confronting me is in a Mostar street rehearsal, a Seeds of Peace coexistence session, or tilted onto a sticky table in a Croatian bar.

But the somewhat lofty language of authentic encounter must also confront the difference between visiting a place of conflict to facilitate an event and living in that place without the possibility of going elsewhere. After conducting a workshop in Serbia in 2000 with youth from Belgrade and Vojvodina, one of the participants forwarded me a note from her friend who asked that her words be widely disseminated. The note reminded me of my privilege, while raising questions about my duty. 'I don't know why I'm writing this to you', she began, writing intimately yet publicly to a network of local and international colleagues in a pre-blogging era. She wondered whether we might care about her situation, which included a recent raid on Belgrade's independent radio station B-92. She mused that most of us wouldn't, 'because it is not happening to you directly'. Reminding us of the privilege we had to *not* care cleverly called this written-to community into ethical relationship with the author and her situation, described in a self-reflective rant that transformed into a somewhat bitter, irony-infused, yet provocative call for witness:

I HATE POLITICS but it is made a part of my every day existence and I am forced to live with that...I don't know if anything is going to change either as most of the people lost hope and even more went away, but this is still my city and I am pissed off about what they're doing to it... In the same time I'm confused and to be honest I would like to get a fuck out of here and never hear anything about wars, hate and aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa@%*!^%#*****^#%(*^ I just want to be able to travel, to dedicate myself to the arts, to talk with my friends about realizing our ideas without non-stop repression... Do you see any solution? What are you waiting for?? COME HERE!! Give the support! And experience the real 'Belgrade springtime' always with some 'state of emergency' going on.

Reading this message almost ten years later I'm still viscerally impacted by the interweaving of analytics and emotion that is beyond-words.

aa@%*! I still feel called to witness. The text remains both an intimately individual expression and a situational index of how a seemingly inescapable repressive politics impacts the everyday. The writer also points towards the complexities of enacting Serbian citizenship. She sees herself as a resident of Belgrade, emotionally connected to the place, 'my city', yet detached from the mechanisms of civic control 'what *they're* doing do it'. She conjures a version of 'us' and 'them' figured less as Serbs against non-Serbs, and more as political elite versus popular subjects, thus alluding to Serbian resistance against the state, a narrative largely absent from external media accounts of the war. But she still evokes an imagined future of mobility, productivity, and collaborative creative expression, before requesting response and help from those not 'there' in the form of active presence and witnessing. We who received the message are called not to *do* but to *see*, to move beyond war tourism towards active witness. It is with that sense of responsibility that I forwarded the message then and repeat it here.

This call for active presence in a traumatic situation is not new. In 1968, Monsignor Ivan Illich noted to a group of US student volunteers that the only thing they could legitimately offer in Latin America at the time was 'voluntary powerlessness, voluntary presence as receivers' (Illich, 1968: 1). Some theatrical scholars/practitioners wrestling with the ethics of how to be in relation with those suffering from the trauma of violent conflict have proposed a similar kind of 'radical passivity' in opposition to 'radical activism', a mode of *being with* rather than *doing for* (Walls, 1999). Like critical ethnography – a field with which it has much in common – ethical activism needs to wrestle with the politics of when to *do* less and listen more.

That's a difficult task for scholars/facilitators like myself, whose work is invested in making and interpreting as well as witnessing. What I propose to explore in the following chapters, alongside others in the field, is an ethics of facilitation. We who engage in this work need to reflect on, and make use of, our relatively privileged positions as both insiders to the process and outsiders to the struggle. The medium of a scholarly monograph can be this place, while at the same time raising challenges about how to write in a way that acknowledges collaboration. In assessing my own practices, alongside those of other theatrical facilitators, I struggle to provide space for those with whom I've worked to write with me and back at me. I archive the process and its failures – particularly my own failures and misunderstandings – to produce greater awareness of how theatre can, and cannot, intervene in situations of violent conflict.

My reflections remain rooted in a belief in the efficacy of performance alongside a call to active presence. The community performances I have witnessed and co-created can produce vital counter-narratives as well as spaces of temporary belonging. In the Balkans, making performance opened ways for youth to work together across ethno-religious boundaries that many still talk and write to me about. Of course, these responses do not qualify as objective measurements of attitudinal shifts, a questionable method of assessment in any event, as studies show these shifts to be transient within intractable conflicts (Hammack, 2006). However, the questions do attest to the long-term affective and material impacts of performance, which can include working together across ethno-religious borders, as well as generating projects *without* the presence of an external mediator. Theatrical facilitation can enunciate different ways of being-with, seeing, and knowing. And I argue that archiving and assessing these long-term impacts continues the process of witness and amplifies the voices of participants.

As a note on that witnessing, I refer to individuals by first names when describing public performances or when I have received their permission to do so. I also quote individuals by first and last name when I have received their permissions through interviews. Otherwise, depending on context, I refer to individuals by type (a 'Macedonian woman from Tetovo'; 'a Jewish Israeli youth') or change the names of those involved.

In chapters referencing the Balkans, I use Serbo-Croatian accents and spelling. A pronunciation chart follows:

- c: 'tz' like tennis nets (Kuftinec = Kuf-TEE-netz)
- ć: soft 'tch' sound often at end of word (Milošević = Mi-LOH-she-vitch)
- č: harder 'ch' sound as in 'church' (Četnik = CHET-nik)
- j: pronounced like 'y' (Jelena = YEH-leh-nah)
- š: 'sh' (Meša Begić = MEH-shah Beg-itch)
- ž: 'zh' (Slavoj Žižek = SLAH-voy ZHEE-Zhek)

I transliterate Hebrew and Arabic with reference to common local spellings for place names. In a study of conflict, language is often politicized. Where different groups refer to the same location with different names or spellings, I try to be transparent about which I choose and why.

I also strive to be transparent about the multiple positions I have occupied in writing about this work – as director, facilitator, witness,

ethnographer, and critic – noting when and how these positions overlap and when I choose to step away from one towards another. Additionally, I recognize that in writing about contemporary conflicts which sustain fierce attachments to singular truth positions that I may need to ‘locate myself’ politically. While I am of Croatian-American heritage and married to a secular Ashkenazi Jewish American, I don’t hold these associations as positional determinants. They have certainly drawn me towards the Balkans and Middle East as arenas of theatrical practice and witness, and I have strong feelings about when and how political power has been abused therein and when those abuses have been named and resisted from within. I work to clearly state those opinions and their basis. But within each encounter, I have been more interested in resisting rather than reinforcing binary oppositions, in illuminating multiple vectors of power, and in working towards alliance-based transformation of violence – whether that violence is physical, structural, or symbolic. Thus, I am not for or against various ‘sides’ – Croatian, Bosniak, Serbian, Israeli or Palestinian. I am, in fact, opposed to the rhetoric *of* ‘sides’. I am *for* locating theatrical encounters that point towards how political power operates on and through the individual body, and how that power may be reclaimed to foster mutual liberation and response-ability for each Other.

1

Contours and Contestations

I'll call her Jelena. At rehearsals in the Varaždin, Croatia, refugee camp I worked at in 1995, she generally showed up dressed in full camouflage gear, wearing her father's army uniform and a slightly disdainful expression. I recognized this skepticism as similar to that expressed by my Croatian-born father when I told him of my pending performance project – collaboratively created with Cornerstone Theater artist Sabrina Peck and an ensemble of youth, aged 16–25, in the camp. My father wondered how theatre could possibly offer anything of value to those suffering from a displacement wrought by violent interethnic conflict. The question unnerved me at the time and continues to do so. It's not a bad question to ask. What *does* theatre have to offer in spaces of violence and territorial dispossession, particularly in the face of narratives that justify those acts as necessary to defend oneself and one's (sometimes newly reconstituted) social group?

I have been asked this question in a different, but equally provocative, register by a sociologist, who challenged theatre's ability to combat state-supported violence. While I don't presume that small-scale productions and processes can, on their own, transform large-scale political practices or shift popular consciousness, having developed and witnessed theatrical facilitations with youth in conflict regions for 13 years, I maintain the potential for performance to reimagine community and reanimate ethical relationships. In an increasingly globalized economy that complicates and challenges notions of the ethnically homogenous nation-state, theatrical facilitations and community-based stagings can offer what Jill Dolan has termed 'performative utopias', moments that affectively conjure how a group in conflict might be together differently (2005a: 6). At the same time, theatre can illuminate the differences that complicate 'reconciliation',

providing a space to think through and enact differing models of social formation. *Theatre, Facilitation, and Nation Formation in the Balkans and Middle East* asks how theatrical practices might reflect and reframe ethnic identity in ways that promote ethical community, probing the relationships between microcosmic theatrical events and macrocosmic politics, particularly around the contested idea of nation formation. In regions marked by territorial disputes, such as the Balkans and Middle East, an assumption of the nation-state as a 'natural' mode of social organization proves troubling. In pursuing this investigation, I am particularly interested in how individuals and groups come to imagine themselves as part of a nation in times of contested state sovereignty, and the role participatory theatre might play in this imagining. Theatre provides a uniquely concentrated place where agonistic visions and individuals in conflict can meet.

I locate my study in three distinct sites and modes of theatrical facilitation, participatory performances or interactive workshops that I have both witnessed and helped to conduct: (1) community reformation through site-specific theatre in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995–2000); (2) performance installation in Berlin as a technology challenging more simplistic strategies for integrating 'the Balkans' into an expanding European Union (2001); and (3) interactive theatrical encounters with Israeli and Palestinian youth and adults (2004–08). I argue that theatrical facilitation makes visible how political power operates on and through the body. By linking individual relations and identities to national identifications and struggles, these projects can enable participants to recognize, examine, and reimagine ideas of nation and community, guided by shared values as well as oppositional identities. Adopting participant observer fieldwork, performance studies frameworks of analysis, and assessment of facilitation techniques grounded in critical and social psychological theory, this comparative investigation examines the possibilities and limitations of theatre within the fields of conflict transformation and studies of nation formation.

Before further laying out the contours of this investigation, in particular the keywords in its title – theatre, facilitation, nation formation, Balkans, and Middle East – I would like to return for a moment to Jelena, to make concrete some of my propositions about theatre and social formation.

It might help to know that Jelena was 16 at the time I met her, an age when psychologist Erik Erikson proposes that the key crisis an individual must resolve relates to identity and group belonging (1959).¹ Like many adolescents, Jelena struggled with fitting in (group) and standing

out (individual), and her camouflage uniform attests to this vacillation. Slumped in the corner of the rehearsal room, her face buried in her green army jacket, Jelena faded into the invisibility that camouflage promises. Yet, by wearing her father's clothes, she indicated an attachment to the Bosnian Croat forces fighting far from the camp. The uniform additionally served as a vivid reminder of where we actually were: in a former army barracks limping towards the close of a violent and complicated war that marked the dissolution of a multiethnic Yugoslavia into politically fraught ethnonational groups.

The regeneration of these oppositional groups was manipulated in large part by political elites struggling for power and control in the region following the 1980 death of Marshall Tito. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, former neighbors and comrades in the former Yugoslav republic began marking out and deferring to sociopolitical and geographic belongings through often violent means. In contrast, I arrived at the Varaždin refugee camp as a Croatian-American who had the privilege of living my hyphenated identity at a safe distance from these events. Work in the camp deeply challenged my understanding of the region I had grown up only visiting, while also opening spaces through theatre to explore only recently redefined social identities. As many of the participants commented to me during and after the rehearsal periods, the theatrical process offered them a chance to narrate themselves as something other than 'Croatian', 'Muslim', 'displaced person', or 'refugee'. Through a collaboratively generated structure in which Peck and I shared our own responses to the questions posed, we asked the mainly Bosnian Muslim refugees and displaced Croatian participants: '*Odakle ste?*' ('Where are you from?') (life before the war); '*Gdje ste?*' ('Where are you now?') (life in the camp); and '*Gdje idete?*' ('Where are you going?') (envisioning a future beyond the status of refugees).²

In imagining their future, we had asked the youth to think about where they would be, with whom they might be, and what they might be doing. Jelena had some fairly specific responses, but we weren't sure whether she would actually perform them onstage since she had never done so in rehearsals. But on the one and only night of our performance she leapt up, still in her camouflage combat gear. '*Videm se!*' ('look at me!'), she challenged the audience of fellow refugees, punctuating her call with a clap of her hands. '*Ja sam samu u Sarajevu ubijem Četnik!*' ('I'm alone in Sarajevo killing [a derogatory term for] Serbs!')³ Jelena clapped once more and spread her arms out towards the audience, encircling them in her future vision. The moment was a remarkable one to witness. Jelena had for the first time in the three weeks that I had known

her, spoken spontaneously and publicly about herself. But the gesture failed as an act of interpellation. The audience of camp and town residents remained attentive but silent, taking in rather than responding to Jelena's provocation. They did not seem hailed by her imagined future act of defeating the 'enemy' Serbs.

There's more to come in this story, focused on how Jelena's final utterance within the show transformed a failed gesture into a utopic imaginary. I'll also take up what it means to relate this kind of redemptive theatrical narrative in a study that focuses as much on contested encounters as on moments of 'hope'. But I'll pause to review again a motivating question driving this study: what does the theatrical process offer to Jelena and other residents of the Varaždin camp – that evening, in the previous three weeks of performance creation – and for others in the facilitated events I witnessed and co-created over the next decade?

For Jelena, it was a chance to be seen, '*Videm se!*', to articulate herself in relation to a social identity, defined through her costume and against another social group (and to later rearticulate herself otherwise). The first kind of negatively interdependent construction of social identity – Jelena is Croatian because she is against Serbs – describes some of the contours of nation formation that I'll elaborate upon below. Other moments within the performance and rehearsal process suggest how theatre can open up the possibilities of being and belonging, to enable participants to think differently beyond stabilized identity politics: to imagine different futures for themselves. To imagine 'peace' instead of war.

For the time being, however, this example hopefully begins to address the terms of my argument by pointing towards how theatrical facilitation operates as an aesthetic space to articulate and thus reflect on the construction of social identity. Before further outlining methodological approaches and organizational strategies, I'd like to take up each of the keywords referenced in this book's title, *Theatre, Facilitation, and Nation Formation in the Balkans and Middle East*.

In his 1976 study *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams identifies terms that both signify and emerge from political struggles over their meaning. He proposes an inquiry into key words in which the problems of meaning seem 'inextricably bound up with the problems [they are] being used to discuss' (1985 [1976]: 15). In this spirit, I'll describe the contours and contestations producing each of the keywords I invoke, working backwards through the title. I'll begin with the regions and ideas conjured by 'The Balkans' and 'Middle East', relate this discussion to nation formation, then look more closely at

how individuals come to see themselves as part of a nation, framing my theatrical practices within the field of conflict transformation, finally proposing how theatre works as a medium and model to illuminate and engage with these disputed concepts.

Keywords

...in the Balkans and Middle East

In my writing so far I've been using the terms 'the Balkans' and 'Middle East' to allude to two conflict regions where I've worked. But I have neither specified what these concepts reference nor how the signifiers themselves have been produced and deployed. Adopting these phrases in my title is, in part, a strategy to defer the discussion that I engage here. More regionally precise, but conceptually awkward phrases such as 'former Yugoslavia' or 'Israel/Palestine' also carry political and ideological weight that potentially predetermines my 'position' in relation to the regions. 'Former Yugoslavia' suggests an absence, perhaps signaling nostalgia for a multiethnic socialist project that erases the sovereign authority of new nation-states. 'Israel/Palestine' might seem to legitimate what is in 2008 not-yet a state (Palestine), while at the same time privileging Israel in a binary construction that predetermines the contours of what is under investigation, namely the nation-state. Reversing the terms of the binary to 'Palestine/Israel' as Ali Abunimah occasionally does in *One Country* (2006) as he discusses a one-state solution to the conflict, would register an even more radical political stance that could prevent some from reading beyond my title. I am also working to highlight the disputed ideas signaled by these terms rather than to simply identify regions where I have worked, and to open up a discussion of nation formation that moves beyond civic or territorial definitions. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and examine the relationship of 'Europe' to these concepts – politically and ideologically as well as geographically. I will take up each term, relate it to the idea of nation formation, particularly as associated with opposition and Otherness, and then detail how some of the youth with whom I have worked narrate themselves through the nation form.

The term 'Middle East', popularized in the early 1900s by naval strategist Alfred Mahan (Koppes, 1976), is constructed from a Western European point of view that assumes both a 'near' and 'far' East (though the regions referenced by these terms have also shifted over time). 'Middle East' was then and is now generally understood to describe a largely Arab-language area around the Persian Gulf of

particular strategic and economic importance to the British and the United States. At times, however, the conceptual boundaries of the 'Middle East' have extended to India (Adelson, 1995: 24). Within a political framework, the 'Middle East' refers to what the United Nations defines as the Arab–Israeli conflict. As Herbert Kelman points out, this conflict has only since the 1967 Israeli occupation become 'Palestinized' and reframed as a 'national' conflict centered on territorial possession and sovereignty (2005: 43). Within this framing, 'Israeli' and 'Palestinian' identities have developed, in part, as oppositional constructions describing a legitimate Self and demonized Other, eliding more complex social identities attached to religion, secularity, language, and citizenship – particularly complicating the positions of Arab citizens of Israel – Palestinian as well as Jewish Arabs (*Mizrachim*). Conflict over national identity can also make less visible how the Israeli state's asymmetrical control of resources such as water, land, and roadways, as well as tensions over Israeli security and Palestinian mobility, significantly impact the regional conflict. In *Redistribution or Recognition?* (2003), Alex Honneth and Nancy Fraser discuss such struggles in terms of the book's title, suggesting that 'redistribution' has been under-theorized. Zygmunt Bauman affirms that conflict analysis has disproportionately focused on individual 'recognition' and 'self-realization' rather than on social justice (1993: 97). This study attempts, in part, to counter the under-theorization of redistribution and social justice in regards to the Middle East conflict, particularly in intergroup encounters, while arguing that 'self-realization', materializing through embodiment, affect, and imagination, can operate as a precursor to transformative actions.

'The Balkans' also emerged from a European perspective to describe an area between the Adriatic and Black Seas. Originally a geographic reference, over time the term gained political currency to signify a region in southeastern Europe formerly under Ottoman Turkish rule. Following the break up of Yugoslavia in 1991, 'the Balkans' came to reference that territory in particular. The shifts in geographical referents have been accompanied by increasingly negative connotations related to the term 'Balkanization', which refers to the splitting up of an area into smaller, often violently oppositional fragments. As Slavoj Žižek points out, 'Balkanization' can reduce a political power struggle to the terms of primordial ethnic hatreds. In a lecture on 'Human Rights and Its Discontents', Žižek draws attention to how European and US media tend to figure the Balkan subject as victim reduced to 'bare suffering', thus constructing a disempowered set of individuals who NATO can

'help' (1999: 9). Yet, Žižek also notes that those living in the region deliberately deploy the Balkan stereotype to exploit Western European guilt to their own ends. Rehearsed by both political actors within the region and Western European respondents to the 1990s war, 'The Balkans' connotes an area perpetually disintegrating through intergroup violence and made up of suffering victim subjects that must be rescued from an ongoing state of emergency. This construction allows political actors in the region to draw attention from their manipulations of 'ethnic conflicts' while Western Europe figures itself as comparatively 'civilized'. Both dynamics sustain 'the Balkans' as geographically and ideologically peripheral.⁴ This placement of the Balkans on the 'edge' of Europe also allows nationalism to be seen as an extreme force, rather than as a more subtle everyday way of imagining popular sovereignty.

Nation formation

But if not a primordial essence occasionally expressed in extreme oppositional violence, how is it that nations form and how are they sustained? What, in fact, is the substance of 'the nation' and what is its relation to a state? Does a globalized economy, dominated by a new logic of Empire (Hardt and Negri, 2000), propelling movements of goods and labor across state borders, and accompanied by postmodern understandings of identity as hybrid, contingent and negotiated (Bhabha, 1990) place us 'beyond' the nation-state?

While the latter question certainly reflects some experiential realities, including my own, thinking in terms of 'nation' or 'national sentiment' – whether constructed from above or driven from below – still has material consequences, as evidenced by events in the two conflict regions I focus on. In fact, in *Nationalism and the State* (1985), John Breuilly argues that 'national sentiment' can better mobilize popular forces to gain elite political power. Eric Hobsbawm concurs, arguing that nationalism creates consensus around a political regime, particularly when armed forces are required. He notes in *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* that the 'establishment of a South Slav kingdom revealed that its inhabitants...could be more easily mobilized under slogans strong enough to produce massacre as Croats, Serbs or Slovenes' (1992: 135). Though often imagined in terms of political sovereignty in a bounded territory, or civic nationalism, the idea of nation also has associations with ethnic nationalism, signaling common cultural ties and what Benedict Anderson (1991) terms 'imagined community'. Indeed, the etymology of 'nation', from its Latin root *natio* – the act of being born – implies ancestry and kinship. Still, this idea of nation as 'ethnic

community' has been disputed in both practice and theory. In an 1882 lecture, Ernest Renan famously asked '*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*' ('What is a nation?'), the title of the talk signaling that the question of 'nation' remained unsettled, yet important enough to ask. Renan attempted to answer his own query, proposing that a nation was animated through daily communal actions of a people, while also noting that these seemingly unified people tended to 'forget' their diverse origins (in Gellner, 1997: 45). Renan thus laid out the terms of nation formation as both popularly enacted and culturally constructed, a play of social memory and forgetting that allows for what Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) refer to as 'invented tradition' to be generated. According to Etienne Balibar (1991), nations must constantly produce themselves, telling stories that create commonalities and mark differences from others. For Anthony Smith, these national stories, alongside commemorative rituals, omnipresent symbols, the idea of a mythic homeland, and a collective destiny, are all part of 'myth-symbol complexes' designed to generate and sustain national attachments (1998: 181). Though figured by many as a product of modernity (Anderson, 1991; Breuilly, 1985; Gellner, 1997; Hobsbawm, 1992), national sentiment extends beyond the logic of industrialized capital. Theories of national sentiment and nation formation must also grapple with the realities of empire that dispersed populations linked by language, religion, and by self-sustaining social narratives. The idea of an alignment of nation, state, and territory must confront population dispersion as well as group competition for the same 'sacred space', rendering territorial contiguity difficult to achieve without violent displacement of Others.

Within zones of conflict, how might a national imaginary manifest differently in a theatrical space, a site that makes that manifestation more transparent and thus malleable? I argue that the participatory theatrical event allows for face-to-face encounters with a previously defined enemy 'Other' outside of a framework of violence. The negotiation of national identity thus becomes flexible and vital rather than life-or-death, or mortal ('killing Serbs in Sarajevo'). To address these propositions through another instance, I'd like to return to the Balkans, or more specifically to Ohrid, Macedonia, a mountainous inland region south of Serbia and east of Albania, and formerly part of the Yugoslav federation.

Imaging the nation in Macedonia

In April 2004 I co-facilitated, with Scot McElvany, a workshop for youth from Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, and the then-UN protectorate of

Kosovo. From 1945–99 Kosovo was an autonomous region in southern Serbia, which Serbs refer to as the ‘cradle of their civilization’, invoking a ‘mythic homeland’ claim to the territory now primarily occupied by ethnic Albanians. Despite the fact that most of the 20 or so youth here know each other, having attended the US-based Seeds of Peace camp in Maine, there was a lot of tension in the room.⁵ Only a few weeks prior to the weekend workshop, violent conflict had broken out in Kosovo resulting in the death of several Serbian residents. How the youth processed this event together says a great deal about the development of, and attachment to, national identities and narratives.

We worked mainly in English, a language common to those who attend Seeds of Peace (and invoking a facilitation dynamic I address below), but also focused on nonverbal communication. The session opened with a cultural mapping exercise designed to heighten awareness of the various networks of relationships and belonging that modulate social identities. Groups formed based on year of attendance at the Seeds of Peace camp, external signs of fashion like facial hair, self-selecting relationships (those in a hotmail chat room), and month of birth. After foregrounding the many ways that individuals can constitute group relationships, my facilitation partner Scot McElvany and I asked participants to locate themselves geographically on an imagined map of the region in the places they were born and where they now lived. From the latter position, participants grouped themselves according to ‘where they felt most comfortable’. The youth confidently located themselves on both a Cartesian grid of location (geographic map) and then on an experiential terrain of belonging (where and with whom they felt at home). The relationship between these two formations alludes to one of the central tensions in the south Balkans region – between national sentiment and the geopolitical borders of the state, between ethnic and civic nationalism.

Following the collapse of the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires in the early twentieth century, Yugoslavia emerged as a multiethnic Kingdom, encompassing the various ethnolinguistic groups of Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Albanians, and Roma, among others. After defeating the more nationalist Croatian fascist Ustaša and Serb royalist Četniks in the early 1940s, Tito’s partisans formulated a ‘second Yugoslavia’, a socialist state designed to quell the extremities of ethnic nationalism, offering some autonomy to its six constitutive republics, while encouraging the mixing of ethno-religious groups (most of whom speak a similar language). Though Serbs are historically Orthodox Christians, Croats affiliate with Roman Catholicism, and Bosnia includes a population who converted

to Islam during the Ottoman Empire's rule, Tito's communist regime did not exactly encourage religious practice, but did allow for inter-marriage. At the same time, though the federal government had at one point attempted to create a 'Yugoslovenstvo' national identity, this effort was dropped in 1964 while the 'equality of nations' was guaranteed in Article 13 of the Yugoslav constitution (Hashi, 1993: 306).

Thus, the break-up of Yugoslavia can be described as a somewhat complicated shift from civic to ethnic nationalism – one manipulated by political elites such as Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, with differing motivations.⁶ National ethnoreligious identity was rehearsed through origin myths, violent rhetoric, and often brutal expressions of 'self-defense'.⁷ But this manipulation was also enabled by Tito's authoritarianism; despite efforts to balance power in the region, his regime had done little to develop participatory democracy or habits of persuasion and compromise via civil society. Additionally, the federal government had not managed to balance economic disparities between industrialized Croatia and Slovenia and less-industrialized Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia, an imbalance exacerbated by an economic downturn in the 1980s. Resentments, anxieties, and vendettas were thus easier to arouse and inflame, leading to ethnic cleansing, forced 'returns', and acts of 'defensive' violence, all of which were both propelled by and generated oppositional national sentiments. These material conditions and the sentiments they aroused were animated in the bodies of our workshop participants, particularly as reflected in an image theatre exercise.

In this exercise, derived from theatre artist Augusto Boal, participants create dynamic sculptures of a situation, idea, or set of relationships. From their positions on the imagined map of relational affinity and attachments to place, I asked the youth participants, with intentional ambiguity, to 'form groups and create an image without speaking'. The spontaneous set of images that emerged provided a stark reflection of the conflicting dynamics of national belonging as experienced by participants.

A 'kick-line' of Albanians from Tirana (Albania), Prishtinë (Kosova), and Tetova (Macedonia) spanned the room, hands raised in the air and linked together, effectively uniting the ethnic Albanians across geopolitical borders.⁸ Behind this linked chain sat a group of four Macedonian Slavs, physically unconnected, with their backs towards the Albanians. In front of the Albanians a tight circle of Kosovo Serbs, and Roma squatted, arms crossed, hands linked together, heads down. Finally, a lone Kosovo Serb stood behind the pan-Albanians, looking through their

raised and linked arms towards the squatting circle of Serbs and Roma. This one young woman had been physically removed from the group of other Kosovo Serbs and Roma in two ways. Her family had recently lost their home in the March conflicts, so she had been apart from the other Kosovo Serbs when I had asked them to locate themselves where they currently lived. She had also detached herself symbolically, as the only Kosovo Serb who had traveled to Ohrid through Pristinë with the Albanians, rather than via a lengthier route that avoided ethnic Albanian territory.

We listened to reflections about the images, looking not only at the 'images of reality' but what Boal calls the 'reality of the image' (1995: 44), focusing on physicality – what participants were actually looking at – before interpretation, what they 'saw'. Some saw the Albanians in a 'traditional dance' while others observed a 'chain or fence' noting, 'they are so involved in their celebrations that they can't see how lonely [the solitary Kosovo Serb] is.' The youth looked at the Macedonians (who had not been as directly involved in recent conflicts, and had fewer publicly articulated national aspirations) as lower, disconnected, seeing them as 'not really expressing anything significant'. We concluded our reflections with the tight circle. 'Their backs are to everyone else', observed a Kosovar Albanian, followed immediately by his interpretation, 'They don't want to cooperate.' Others saw the circle as 'exclusive' and 'suspicious'. 'They are planning something', an Albanian girl suggested. After these projections, we took a break, intending to move on to another exercise that would build on the images. But the Serbs and Roma were distraught. 'They didn't get it', my partner Scot overheard one of the Roma kids mutter, 'We are in jail.'

The Kosovo Serbs and Roma, who had both been under attack by Kosovar Albanian mobs only a few weeks previously, felt completely misunderstood. They felt that the others had not really seen them. So we returned to the image, and the youth now saw 'protection' as well as 'exclusion'. The Albanians were, however, unable to see the same mixed dynamic in their own image. 'Our group was open, accepting others', said one Albanian, without noting that the Albanians' backs had been turned to the lone Kosovo Serb and all of the Macedonian Slavs.

The image work slowed down the conversation among the youth, keeping it focused on reflections and observations of a single site, one that surfaced national narratives and related violence while complicating the Kosovar/Serb binary. Once the image broke up and the group began conversing, a more inflammatory and diffuse debate ensued with accusations flying about territorial control and treatment of minorities. No

one seemed able to envision the possibility of a multiethnic civic state, despite the presence of Roma in the Kosovo Serb image, and in Kosovo itself. In an exercise that followed, participants grouped themselves by self-defined ethnic nation rather than state. In producing iconographic representations of their 'homeland', the Slavic Macedonians 'forgot' the Albanians who resided in Macedonia, the border-crossing Albanians continued to imagine a nation beyond state territorial limits, while the Kosovo Serbs emphasized their historical and religious claims to the territory that the Kosovar Albanians now occupied. The participants could not imagine a culture disconnected from past tradition, a history distinct from present-day stories of the nation, or hybrid identities. Only the Roma, in a later presentation and performance, provided a different imagined idea of nation, detached from a state and linked to global culture. By the end of the workshop, many of the participants had experienced revelations about how their social identities were constructed and complex. 'There are more groups within groups, greater divisions within delegations', one participant reflected, beginning to recognize how national sentiment might elide difference.

Within the exercises I've related, however, most of the youth initially experienced their national identities as concrete, eternal, and certain. Only later in the workshop did they come to see these identities as partially imagined and constructed and the narratives of oppositional conflict as more complex. 'I learned something more deep about this conflict between us through the images', a participant noted in evaluations, 'that it wasn't so black and white.'

If the work of nation formation is, in some measure, to tell the stories that selectively remember the past, collapsing differences within one group and highlighting distinction from another, the work of facilitation is, in part, to deconstruct those stories, generating new narratives through intergroup encounters. But 'facilitation' is also embedded in its own contested discourse, related to the leading of theatrical workshops as well as to studies of conflict and its mediation.

Facilitation

In the context of theatrical workshops, facilitation refers to the role of the individual guiding activities and dialogue. But this guidance is neither neutral nor detached, particularly for an English-speaking US citizen working with Israelis and Palestinians through a Boal-based theatrical model. Before elaborating on the troubling 'mediation role' of the US facilitator, or on the Boalian idea of the theatrical facilitator as 'Joker' or 'difficultator', I will look at facilitation within the discourse of

conflict studies and intergroup encounters. I discuss these encounters within an International Relations as well as intergroup framework, lay out the implicit and explicit theories that inform the study of conflict and its mediation, and relate these theories to the Seeds of Peace camp in the US.

Multi-track diplomacy and theories of intergroup conflict

Within the era of the nation-state, international relations have largely been conducted through a diplomatic process by political elites. In the Cold War era, framed by US/Soviet competition for political influence, conflict negotiation became professionalized. The idea that facilitated encounters with civic groups could complement this process formally emerged in 1981, when US State Department employee Joseph Montville coined the phrases 'Track One' and 'Track Two' diplomacy (Montville and Davidson, 1981). Track Two, also referred to as 'people-to-people' encounters, focused less on political negotiation than on reducing conflict through 'improved communication and a better understanding of each other's point of view' (McDonald and Bendahmane, 1987: 1). Social psychological theories related to this model focus on rehumanizing the image of the enemy Other through contact and communication. An underlying assumption of most Track Two encounters is that conflict can be comprehended and addressed through rational discourse, a dialogue structure premised on the existence of commonly reasoning subjects or autonomous and individual 'rational actors', which presumes that the other can be 'understood' since he or she is ultimately the same.⁹

This model has been contested on both political and theoretical grounds. According to Human Needs theorist John Burton (1998), the US State Department initially refused to print McDonald and Bendahmane's book on Track Two diplomacy – despite the fact that McDonald was a State Department Ambassador – due to anxieties over loss of control of the diplomatic process. Since that time, however, McDonald has worked with Louise Diamond to develop a multi-track system, accepted by the political elite, though still deploying the language of conflict *resolution*, and mainly grounded in dialogue.

A Seeds of Peace facilitator and scholar, Wesley Days, offers a critique of International Relations and professional conflict mediation noting that both are 'Cold War creations that emerged as a strategy for the US and its allies to provide an alternative to geopolitical military solutions'. Often equated with American imperialism, conflict mediation can operate as 'a smoke screen and distraction from the root problem of

justice and land for subjugated peoples. The word “resolution” implies to the practitioner that violent conflict would end and normal political, economic relations would begin’ (2008a).

In fact, a growing multidisciplinary field in conflict studies has drawn from sociology, psychology, international relations, and cultural anthropology to challenge the assumption that conflict must be ‘managed’ or ‘resolved’. Conflict resolution, argues Zygmunt Bauman in *Postmodern Ethics*, is an ideal of modernity, one that believes the force of rationality applied to a particular situation will lead to a solution (1993: 8). In an introduction to *Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, Kevin Avruch adds that rational discourse models of conflict management, at least in the United States, rely on a white middle-class emphasis on reason rather than affect. In most resolution models, he explains, emotions are either absent (as in mathematical game theory and economic theories of bargaining), or something one must ‘get past’ (1991: 4–6).

Those working in intercultural encounters rather than international relations favor the idea of conflict *transformation*, a more holistic model, according to John Lederach, than conflict ‘management’ or ‘resolution’ (1995: 18). Conflict transformation additionally provides a sense that relational work is ongoing, placing less focus on reaching a solution, and more on developing and investigating relationships through face-to-face encounters (Saunders, 1999). These encounters ideally raise consciousness about power dynamics and differential existential perspectives, a process that can lead towards more informed collective actions to make changes at the structural or systemic level. Before elaborating on and adding theatrical components to this model, I would like to lay out some other theories of conflict and its analysis that frame most intergroup encounters.

In 1991 Joseph Scimecca claimed that the field of conflict mediation lacked a theoretical base. That is, though numerous explanations of conflict existed, there were fewer explicit theories about its mediation. So according to Scimecca, ‘the field is left with a number of processes that are dependent upon the idiosyncratic expertise of the individual practitioners’ (1991: 34). While my experiences with international conflict mediation suggest that Scimecca’s analysis still holds true in some cases, a number of conflict mediation theories now exist, most rooted in rival, but complementary social psychological approaches. I will focus on those most closely related to the facilitation practices I have led or observed: social identity and realistic group theories, before returning to Lederach and some additional theories of conflict mediation and transformation.

The social identity and realistic group theories are similar in focusing on groups rather than individuals. In contrast, many US encounter models are based on often implicit models of 'contact hypothesis' (Allport, 1954), centered on the development of interpersonal rather than intergroup relations. The two theories differ mainly in proposing whether identity and its recognition in the former, or resources and their distribution in the latter, are the primary forces fueling intergroup conflict (thus linking to Honneth and Fraser's debate regarding resources and recognition).

Though conflicts between groups may be substantive, social identity theorists argue that conflict primarily emerges from psychological dynamics between positive ingroup (the primary social community) and negative outgroup (the oppositional or Other group outside of the primary community) feelings. The tendency for humans to form and identify with social groups has influenced ideas about nation formation as well as intergroup conflict models. Several studies in the mid-twentieth century elucidated this tendency towards group formation. Henri Tajfel's minimal group experiments illuminated how individuals form groups based on an almost trivial basis. Social identity theory, developed by Tajfel and John Turner (1979), elaborates on how individuals build positive identities on the basis of group membership (ingroup), and negatively compare, and thus manage boundaries between, other groups (outgroup). A number of studies of conflict and the negative portrayal of outgroups affirm Tajfel and Turner's work (Abu-Nimer, 1999; Gurr, 1996; Mitchell, 1981; Volkan, 1997). In societies in which there is a high level of conflict, the groups become more polarized with ethnic or religious groupings assuming primacy over other forms of identity (Volkan, 1997). The mediation of conflict within this theory thus focuses on defusing the conflict by humanizing the other, and developing more expansive ingroups, though high levels of violence may make contact more difficult to initiate.

The Seeds of Peace camp in Maine, where I worked for several summers as a facilitator from 2000–05, has implicit links to social identity theory in its mediation work with South Asian, Balkan, and (mainly) Arab/Israeli youth. Founded in 1993 by journalist John Wallach, Seeds of Peace is a US-based non-profit, non-governmental organization that brings together youth from various conflict regions for three-week summer camp sessions. The youth participate in sports, games, and dialogue designed to actively promote contact, understanding, and leadership. Seeds of Peace works mainly with departments of education in participating countries to select youth from a variety of economic

backgrounds and political leanings, supporting lower-income attendees with scholarships. Selected youth tend to want to engage 'the Other', but are not predisposed towards postnational positions on their various conflicts. In early sessions founder John Wallach urged campers to 'make one friend' (contact hypothesis), yet the camp also generates ceremonies, rituals, and activities designed to create a more expansive ingroup – that of a 'Seed of Peace'. Soon after campers arrive they don green Seeds of Peace T-shirts (originally a camper's idea), which they wear for most of their time in the program, including public outings to a minor league baseball game, a shopping mall, 4th of July parade or local town fair (each of which, in their own way, rehearse 'American' identity). Though US perspectives, embedded in a rhetoric of 'neutrality', infuse the sessions – English is the camp's lingua franca – efforts are consistently made to enhance group identity as a 'Seed'. Early in the session a flag ceremony rehearsing the nation form is held outside of the camp's gates. A representative of each country, including the Occupied Palestinian Territories, makes a speech before their flag. The delegation then sings their national anthem, together bodying forth their attachments to nation. Except for the Arab Israelis, most of who either drift over to the Palestinian delegation or remain silent during the Israeli anthem, *Ha Tikva*, which addresses the longing for a Jewish homeland in Zion. After this embodied display of nation and its complications, everyone marches back into the camp arm-in-arm singing together (in English) 'I am a Seed of Peace', with lyrics written by an Egyptian graduate of the program, celebrating the uniting of people of peace.

Fellow Seeds of Peace facilitator and scholar Ned Lazarus notes in his doctoral dissertation prospectus that the camp's capacity to generate interpersonal relations and humanize the enemy Other is well-documented in the short term.¹⁰ But follow-up studies with Seeds of Peace and participants in a similar program portray graduates struggling to sustain these positive transformations, at times even hardening their national ingroup identities at the expense of the more expansive ingroup temporarily formed in Maine (Hammack, 2006).

Realistic group theory proposes some reasons why. This conflict model also focuses on stereotyping and discrimination of outgroups, but suggests that conflict arises over competition for resources that, if unresolved, develops a psychological dynamic – leading to regressive group identity and demonization of the Other. Muzafer Sherif's Robber's Cave experiment is oft-cited as an exemplar of this theoretical model, though the experiment also draws from social identity theory. In the summer of 1953, Sherif and his research team divided 20 or so 11-year-old boys,

of deliberately selected homogenous backgrounds, into two groups, the self-named Rattlers and Eagles. Over several days in separation, each group developed characteristics that they thought of as positive – toughness for the Rattlers, prayer for the Eagles – characteristics viewed negatively by the other group. The experimenters then entered into a ‘friction phase’, in which the boys competed with each other for various resources and trophies. When brought together, name-calling and singing of derogatory songs ensued. The groups burned each other’s flags, raided each other’s cabins, and basically heightened their contempt for the other through actions targeted at social identity (flags) and resources (cabins). Experimenters then tried to institute a final conciliation phase. Initial interpersonal contact opportunities (seeing a movie together or bean counting) failed. But the development of ‘super-ordinate goals’ succeeded in significantly reducing enmity between the two. The goals centered on problems that could only be resolved by the two groups working together, such as moving a pile of (deliberately placed) rocks blocking their bus on a road trip.

The Seeds of Peace camp session reflects several elements of this experiment, in everyday cooperative activities as well as in the highly anticipated end-of-camp Color Games. Many East Coast summer camps have a version of this activity, more often identified as Color Wars with dubious attachments to ideas about Native American customs, behavior, and rituals.¹¹ After generating an expansive ‘Seeds of Peace’ identity, punctuated by daily intergroup coexistence or dialogue sessions, the campers are broken into Green and Blue teams, deliberately mixed across gender, country of origin, and skill base. Through competitive games, art projects, and hoarsely shouted cheers coached by five or six carefully selected camp counselors, the groups develop cohesion. Color Games in fact challenges the expansive ‘Seeds of Peace’ identity formed over the previous three weeks, leading to new subgroup attachments based entirely on T-shirt color; I have witnessed fierce loyalties develop in a mere three days. This new subgroup identification crosses previous lines of division across gender, nationality, religion, and politics. The experience of this artificially produced, but emotionally felt loyalty provokes deep reflection for many of the campers about the constructed nature of ingroup identities and national belonging. They spend a final intergroup encounter session processing the experience before returning home, with the mission of activating what they have learned in the places that they live.

Many do. But, as others have argued, and studies have shown, this model of expansive ingroup identity cannot fully sustain itself within

the ongoing competition for limited resources, oppositional narratives of national belonging, structural and physical violence, insecurities and humiliations that permeate everyday life in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Hammack, 2006; Posner, 2006). Even within the camp, a peaceful oasis on Pleasant Lake in Maine, conflicts erupt, marking how fragile the Seeds of Peace identity can be when confronted with events in the campers' homelands. One such event illuminates the fragility of conflict transformation through the generation of a more inclusive ingroup identity.

I began working at Seeds of Peace in the summer of 2000, in the waning days of hope for a just and mutually agreeable resolution of major conflict in the region – prior to the failure of the Camp David summit, the outbreak of the second intifada, and the killing of a well-beloved Arab Israeli Seed, Asel Asleh, by domestic Israeli police forces.¹² Tensions were already high on the first Friday of camp when a Palestinian boy learned that his close relative had been hospitalized, shot by an Israeli soldier. Soon after hearing the news, he and his friends met a group of Orthodox Jewish Israeli campers returning from prayer and laughing amongst themselves. Though the Israelis knew almost nothing about the recent death, their laughter outraged the Palestinians, who saw this 'disrespect' as symbolic of the arrogance with which the occupation was conducted. A mild scuffle erupted into a large-scale all-camp conflict. The campers were quickly separated by delegation, and as I sat with a small group of US campers on a tennis court, John Wallach stood with the Palestinians in a camp building known as the Small Hall. Most of the boys had by then ripped off their Seeds of Peace T-shirts, and stood bare-chested and defiant before the camp's Jewish-American founder, asserting their Palestinian identity as primary. They felt betrayed by this organization that seemed to condone laughter in the face of death. Wallach spoke eloquently and passionately with the boys, removing his own shirt, and throwing it to the ground in a dramatic gesture that signaled his willingness to forego a symbolic Seeds identity in solidarity with the boys' anger and grief.

The gesture worked, at least within the confines of the camp. Tempers were defused. The boys put their shirts back on. Coexistence sessions the next day worked through tensions and motivations for the angry ruptures. One Palestinian made a point of visiting each coexistence group to apologize for what had occurred, offering a personal guarantee of security, and reinforcing the importance of ongoing dialogue. By the next evening, much to my surprise, the camp united in a Dress Your Counselor talent show, a somewhat bizarre superordinate objective

involving carnivalesque social subversion – the willing humiliation of the camp staff by the campers – that effectively knit the camp together again. At least for the remainder of the session.

Negotiating between powerful national narratives that justify and fuel ‘defensive’ violence on both sides, the realities of fear, insecurity, and humiliation that Israeli and Palestinian campers experience on a daily basis where they live, and a greater ‘Seeds of Peace identity’ proves challenging, but remarkably effective within the camp’s carefully structured, and equally carefully unstructured, playful sessions. The camp works through a combination of contact (interpersonal relations developed through competitive sports and cooperative arts), social identity (Seeds of Peace ingroup identity, as well as – for most campers – a shared ‘not-American’ outgroup identity), and realistic group models of conflict mediation (Color Games and reflective dialogue sessions). Over the course of three weeks campers live together in cabins (separated by gender), eat together at assigned lunch tables – peppered with Seeds of Peace chants and cheers, play together in activities ranging from yoga to ping-pong, and talk together in dialogue sessions. Other than a few delegation meetings, the campers are always in groups mixed across country of origin.

The ‘coexistence’ or ‘dialogue’ sessions offer two additional models of encounter, both of which add a focus on power analysis, the first through reflection and discussion and the second through deliberate disorientation. When I worked at the camp from 2000–05 as a facilitator (using some theatrical tactics), Palestinians and Israelis made up at least half of the facilitation teams, and were often trained by the School for Peace in Neve Shalom/Wahat Al Salam, an intentionally binational Arab-Jewish village in Israel. The School’s training brings together social identity theory with power relations analysis (Halabi and Sonnenschein, 2000), working to recognize links between national narratives, competition for resources such as water, land, and roadways, and control of borders and security. As I detail in Chapter 4, the School for Peace model of facilitation works to highlight the association between intergroup relations in an encounter session, and the large-scale dynamics of power and conflict in the region.

While drawing on all of the above theories, particularly power analysis, Wesley Days offers an alternative approach to discussion-based mediation, moving beyond a binary, structural model of competing national narratives and beyond a discussion-oriented model of encounter. I will discuss this practice in detail in Chapter 5, but highlight a few key elements here. Drawing from survival strategies of being a Black

American who has learned to read situations of power and shift identities accordingly, his study and work in International Relations, his performance as a musician, Afro-Brazilian spiritual practice of *Candomblé* and the ritual of capoeira, Days works to disorient participants – to complicate their concepts of the conflict, of their identity, of the very structure of a ‘dialogue session’. Movement, music, and ritual challenge logos, rationality, structured time, and ways of behaving relationally in space. This disorientating praxis is deliberately designed to resist solutions, to resist modernist models of ‘moving forward’ and ‘using time well’. The only way to deal with the conflict, argues Days, is to recognize its links to global capital, American imperialism, and neoliberalism and to transform this system at its very core, beginning with the consciousness of participants about how they are interpolated into it. The ‘conflict’ becomes less about competition (for recognition, resources, and narrative) between Israeli and Palestinian youth, and more about a struggle between stabilized and post-structural ways of thinking and being. Within this framework, the United States is less a neutral ‘free space’ for conflict mediation, and more of an active force within the conflict. While Days creates a container for the process, he does not dictate any kind of actions. Dictating practice rather than facilitating disorientation, he argues, would replicate an authoritative system that must be transformed.

Days’s Afro-Brazilian inspired disorienting praxis resonates with two other Brazilians, Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire. Boal prefers the term ‘Joker’ or ‘difficultator’ to ‘facilitator’, implying a more active role in a group process. Rather than simply guiding activities, or operating as an expert with more knowledge than participants, the Boalian Joker functions as a provocateur. The Joker sustains debate, relays doubts, and disrupts easy answers in order to cultivate more in-depth collective reflections and disorient participants from received understandings. ‘The Joker must be Socratic’, asserts Boal, helping participants to ‘gather their thoughts to prepare their actions.’ At the same time the Joker must move beyond Socrates who, according to Boal, ‘framed questions that expected answers, and, in so doing, limited the field of discussions ...’ (2002: 262). The Joker is allied with the figure in a pack of cards, a ‘non-aligned’ agent who moves between suits. Thus the Joker has a certain mobility that ideally allows him or her to open up and to deepen rather than to foreclose debate, difference, and dissent. I will detail how both Chen Alon and Wesley Days differentially take up this position in Chapters 4 and 5. For now, I briefly note that Alon, as a reserve combat officer in active resistance to Israeli occupation, and Days, as an African

American with training in international relations as well as music, movement, and ritual, both facilitate in tactical ways that embrace the Joker's position as flexible and liminal.

As elaborated upon in Chapter 4, Alon adopts the joking techniques of asking provocative questions in both structured encounters and everyday life situations as an activist Israeli citizen. Wesley Days adapts techniques more aligned with the Joker as *curinga*, a figure that Mady Schutzman reclaims from Boal's mid-twentieth century Arena Stage productions in Sao Paulo. Schutzman identifies the *curinga* as less of a rational facilitator and more of a 'live theorist and pattern detector' (2006: 134). Indeed, Days's facilitation practices rely less on structured exercises or dialogue, and more on a ritual process in which the youth become better interpreters of the text of their conflict. They begin to see the patterns in the room, assumptions in themselves, and to share these insights with each other. Days and Alon both work with a *maieutic* process of elicitation echoing Paulo Freire's liberatory pedagogy as a mode of education rooted in undoing oppressive systems.

Freire's pedagogical model also influences another scholar in the field of conflict transformation, John Lederach, who offers a useful permutation on mediation through his intercultural practice. In *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (1995), Lederach describes a flexible model of facilitation that brings together ethnographic research and popular education. Rather than devising a specific mediation model, which he sees as inevitably culturally biased, didactic, and therefore less effective in developing participants' analytic skills, Lederach argues for a more open, elicitive approach that strengthens the reflective capacities of a group. He also proposes a long view of conflict transformation. Early stages expose the narratives generated to sustain attachments to ingroups. Increased awareness leads to collective demands for change and work with advocates to increase the voice of those with less political power.

After eight years of work with Israeli and Palestinian youth, facilitating and observing others' facilitation techniques, I argue for an intersectional and situational approach to conflict transformation that addresses all of the following in some way: (1) interpersonal and intergroup contact that surfaces social identity and national narratives, thus reducing demonization of the Other while making visible how group identities are constructed; (2) power analysis that looks at resources and the ways that they are controlled, thus acknowledging the systemic macropolitics that fuel conflict and how these politics are reflected within the encounter session; and (3) interactions that address the interdependent

nature of conflict, imagining and enacting more authentic ways of being-in-the world. This intersectional approach translates into a developmental arc that I discuss in Chapter 4 and materializes in specific theatrical practices elaborated on in Chapter 5. Within each of these frames, the raising of consciousness, or Freirian *conscientização*, leads to a greater awareness of the self-in-context.

According to Freire, 'naming the world', and through that naming revealing some of the contradictions of social reality, simultaneously promotes personal and social transformation as the world becomes viewed as changeable (2000 [1970]: 88). Ideally, the encounter work generates transformation at the individual, group, and structural level, creating new social narratives that can eventually lead to concrete non-violent systemic changes rooted in just approaches to power sharing, mutual security, and balanced control and distribution of resources. Encounters through theatre can provide a more affective, and potentially more effective, space where all this might occur, although this cannot be accomplished in the short term. And it is never easy or absent of its own contradictions.

I began this introduction asking what theatre might offer groups in conflict. Though not yet engaging the long term or the large scale (addressed in Chapter 4), I hope that the examples cited here begin to speak to this question within the framework of nation formation and facilitation. But like the other keywords in my title, 'theatre' too suggests a variety of contested meanings, particularly when framed as a social and participatory project as well as an aesthetic and witnessed event.

Theatre

Since the advent of Performance Studies as a discipline and technology of analysis, theatre has been under greater scrutiny. In his study of *The Radical in Performance* (1992), Baz Kershaw praises the expressive excess of performance in contrast with the discursive limits of theatre. According to Kershaw, the commodification of theatre, of most theatre-in-a-theatre-building, limits its potential to provoke reflection and change. While I concur with Kershaw about the limitations of location, I argue for the relevance and effectiveness of theatre as a specific embodied representational practice generated for a witnessing audience. This study does adopt performance studies frameworks of analysis, including attention to the wider 'performance field' that Richard Schechner discusses in his seminal text *Performance Theory* (1988: 72). Yet, I also draw on the specificity of theatre, particularly what Schechner and fellow scholar/practitioner James Thompson term 'social theatre'.

In a special issue of *The Drama Review* (2004), Thompson and Schechner's introductory essay offers useful concepts for analyzing and assessing the effectiveness of a kind of theatre referred to in various locations as theatre for development, *teatro sociale*, applied, community-based, or popular theatre. Underlining the multiplication of theatre as a practice, the authors assess how various forms of social theatre work. I draw on this foundational essay when discussing community-based theatre in the Balkans in Chapter 2, introducing a different set of concerns for theatre that operates within the framework of facilitated encounter in Chapters 3 and 4.

While Thompson and Schechner do not directly address intergroup encounters, they offer productive ways of thinking about theatre practiced in times and places of crisis, as a space for healing, action, community building, and art. They raise important questions about process, disciplinary accommodations, and the ethics of representation, ultimately proposing that this kind of theatre, often practiced in 'non-theatre' venues that carry additional social and spatial meanings, can serve as a space of testimony, accusation, action, alleviation, and even entertainment. 'Never underestimate what a relief a good time loaded with fun, fantasy, and imaginary escape can bring', they observe (2004: 15).

I think back upon that evening at the Seeds of Peace camp in summer 2000, of the youth so recently divided by crisis, united by the silliness of dressing an older staff member as Pippi Longstocking. That kind of playfulness, following a day of intense intergroup dialogue but itself removed from the specific politics of the Middle East, provided a space of respite, a moment of feeling what it would be like to be together differently, a fleeting, genial kind of performative utopia that complemented the more difficult work of negotiating conflicting political realities and national narratives.

In addition to creating spaces of playfulness, the theatrical process offers the means to more directly address conflicting narratives, and to animate different ways of being together. Conflict transformation scholars Craig Zelizer and Cynthia Cohen each propose distinct approaches to thinking through how the arts generate spaces for negotiating conflict. Zelizer concentrates on projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina, during and immediately after the 1990 war. In *The Role of Artistic Processes in Peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (2004), Zelizer proposes how the visual and performing art projects he studied serve as a barometer of tensions, shore up resistance, and lead eventually to peace-building. In *A Poetics of Reconciliation*, Cohen lays out a more theoretical proposition about why aesthetic structures are uniquely

well-suited for projects of reconciliation, based in part on her work with Israeli and Palestinian youth at Seeds of Peace. Cohen argues that poetic forms bring about the intersection of the personal and political, and promote a deeper quality of listening allowing for what Cohen terms 'transsubjectivity'. Borrowing from Bachelard, Cohen identifies this concept as 'the simultaneous deepening understanding of self and other, in relation to each other that Bachelard identifies with the workings of poetry' (1997: 30). According to Cohen, through transsubjectivity in arts-based reconciliation, the action of former enemies becomes 'morally "visible" to each other' (1993: 117).

In addition to Zelizer's propositions about the role of arts in peace-building, Cohen's transsubjective poetics of reconciliation, and Schechner and Thompson's ethics, sequence, and taxonomy of social theatre practices, I would like to add several ideas about theatre's capacity for mediating and potentially transforming conflict situations. In the projects I've produced and observed, theatre serves variously as: a 'safe' zone in a divided city; an aesthetic site for producing and reflecting social identities and counter-memories; an embodied public sphere of material and metaphorical discourse; a way of reanimating spatial meanings; an arena of play; an imaginative realm that allows for the envisioning and embodying of other future life worlds; a superordinate objective that brings together groups across difference; and, finally, as an intersubjective means to explore new ways of figuring empathy and affect. A few projects that I've witnessed also manage to tackle structural and systemic change over the long term.

In the chapters to come, I will elaborate on how I see these theatrical capacities working differently in the Balkans, Europe, and Middle East – more specifically, in Mostar, Berlin, Jerusalem, and various other locations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Israel, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In the meantime, I would like to briefly discuss one of the more complex and disputed ideas cited above, that of empathy.

In theatrical terms, empathy has been positioned as that aspect of human-ness that connects us as an audience community. But empathy, as a mode of perception, does not necessarily imply ethical action, and may in some cases rely upon victimization.¹³ Augusto Boal and Gay Cima have proposed that 'empathy' can obscure the material conditions that create suffering and/or substitute feeling for action. According to Cima, fostering 'empathy' per se is less the point. Fellow-feeling needs to be aligned with judgment and mobilized towards ethical ends.¹⁴

In my experience, theatre as a mode of conflict mediation and inter-group encounter can access this kind of feelings-towards-judgment that precedes and ideally prompts mobilization. This can occur through direct means, storytelling and active listening, as well as through an indirect process of creating together. This access to the affect of the other by indirect means can potentially lead to more transsubjective moments than dialogue or story alone. Over 13 years I have accumulated some evidence to suggest how theatre has worked as a superordinate objective that brings together groups in conflict around a common task-oriented goal, as a liminal space of boundary renegotiation, where embodied and symbolic images provide a means to expose and extend the limits of consciousness, and as a site to both envision and embody other future life-worlds. While these moments do not immediately convene those other worlds, or completely rewrite the individual's narrative of social or national belonging, I believe quite strongly that they provide the groundwork to better do so in the future. Imagining those different futures through a kind of activist empathy forges temporary ethical communities in relation *with* rather than in opposition *to* another. The forging of ethical communities on this micro plane may lead to more far-reaching social transformation at the macro level of the nation.

There are, of course, limitations to what theatre and theatrical facilitation can actually do, and an elaboration of keywords cannot fully contextualize aspects of the projects I undertook and witnessed. This study requires an examination not only of critical vocabularies but also of the methods and ethics of field research and its analysis.

Methods and ethics

I have, in some ways, been practicing my methods of analysis throughout this chapter, drawing on participant observer research and analyses of performance through the lenses of nation formation, intergroup encounter, and conflict studies. I have been doing so by means of backward mapping, retroactive fieldwork analysis not uncommon in conflict mediation research. Like most of the theatre projects I write about, facilitation work is often not initiated as a study, but assessed (if at all) after the fact. Looking back on several years of collaboratively creating, facilitating, and observing theatrical work in the Balkans, Europe, and Middle East, I would like to more explicitly map my methods of fieldwork and analysis, and the related ethical issues that inform both, drawing distinctions between theatrical performance in the Balkans and theatrical facilitation in the Middle East.

Ethics of fieldwork

I began working in the Balkans region in 1995 through Suncokret, a Croatian-based organization that structured workshops in refugee and displacement camps. I spent three weeks in Varaždin with co-director Sabrina Peck and photographer Jessie Chornesky, creating collaboratively generated pieces with residents of two camps and a refugee center in the town. We used Boal-based image theatre, ensemble movement work, and open-ended questions to create a short reflective performance drawn from experience and imaginings, animated through physical metaphor and movement. I had intended the project in Varaždin to be a short-term break from dissertation research on Cornerstone Theater, but found myself continuously drawn back to the Balkan region due to the sense of responsibility I had to what I had witnessed. To leave the people and the place, to confine their stories and situations to a three-week experience seemed problematic. But how to continue working and documenting the experiences raised a new set of procedural questions. My subsequent research, practice, writing, and activist engagement grew from this project and the dilemmas it produced.

Looking backwards, I see this journey as reflecting what D. Soyini Madison terms an 'activist performance ethnography' that advocates for change; a 'critical theory model' in which 'social life is represented and analyzed for the political purpose of overcoming social oppression' (2005: 6). Yet, the conflicts I examine require a more expansive terminology than 'social oppression', which implies an already agreed-upon society. While I strive towards expanding the range of activist ethnography in assessing projects in socially disputed regions, I apply this framework of analysis retrospectively. At the time I began working in the Balkans, an activist stance seemed more of a necessary consequence of the work than a practiced theory. I felt a responsibility to develop relationships with individuals and organizations dedicated to ending the massive killings and displacements, and later, to post-war reconciliation work.¹⁵ Based on ongoing conversations with other activists from the region, I sought to work with those organizations that had long-term commitments and a leadership structure including local people. When limited to paid and volunteer international staff, non-governmental organizations run the danger of actually preventing the re-emergence of civil society. Craig Zelizer also cautions that mediation needs to be understood as part of a global economy of peace-making, in which paid facilitators function in part as a 'training mafia' whose incomes derive from others' suffering (2004: 259–60). Even projects run by volunteers can foster the kind of troubling Hero/Victim relationship

that political theorist Alain Badiou claims that human rights rhetoric casts the empathizer (usually the Western European subject, or Western Europe more generally) as Hero in a way that requires the consistent presence of Victims (2001: 12–13).

Thus, the fact that my work was ‘unpaid’, though supported through grants and fellowships, does not alleviate the necessity to reflect on its impact, and the related necessity of building alliances and theorizing practice rather than working as an independent, short-term facilitator. Locating regional partners, those working in a longer-term capacity in Bosnia-Herzegovina, became a crucial component of continuing theatrical mediations. From 1996–2003 I collaborated with Scot McElvany, a US theatre artist working at the time I met him with a youth center in Mostar funded by a German organization, with paid local and volunteer international staff. We developed a long-term partnership based on my status as a Croatian-American and his relationships with youth at the center, creating theatre and installations grounded in storytelling, allegory, and physical metaphor, based on themes suggested by the youth participants. These themes often emerged from long conversations over coffee and cigarettes rather than through any kind of formalized process.

Through these conversations and long-term relationships, we were striving to develop an ethics of what Dwight Conquergood calls ‘dialogic performance’, a mode of ethical engagement that struggles to bring together different voices so that they can ‘question, debate, and challenge one another’ (1982: 9). This kind of dialogic ethics echoes Freire’s theories of liberatory pedagogy laid out in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000 [1970]). Freire asserts that education as liberation rather than domination consists of being in dialogue, while providing tools that help others to perceive social reality and its contradictions, developing the critical consciousness to name and change the world.

My theatrical work in the Middle East and with Seeds of Peace more consciously addresses the troubling relationship of the US facilitator in conflict areas. While I continue to reflect on my own facilitation praxis, I focus more on the work of others, particularly those who overtly challenge models of ‘resolution’ and neutrality, like Wesley Days. I also attend more to Israeli and Palestinian facilitators, with the belief that any transformation that occurs in the region needs to be primarily enacted and sustained by those who live there, and must grapple with the experiential dynamics of oppression, subjugation, and the needs of mutual security. Within this framework, alliances between Israeli and Palestinian facilitators present a complex set of material and ideological

challenges, detailed in Chapters 4 and 5. I encountered these challenges during several field trips. Over the summer of 2004 I volunteered at the Seeds of Peace Center in Jerusalem, where I led some workshops and observed a School for Peace facilitation training course. In 2006, I met Israeli scholar, activist, and theatre artist, Chen Alon, who works in alliance with a number of Israeli and Palestinian organizations and individuals. I spent several weeks between 2006–08 observing interactive theatre with Palestinian and Israeli youth and adults. In addition to field notes from these observations, and intensive conversations with Alon that worked through many of the theoretical paradigms articulated in Chapter 4, I conducted semi-formal interviews with participants and facilitators. I also examine how organizations sponsoring interactive projects position themselves publicly, seeking to determine in what ways they do or do not map the dynamics of regional conflict. Much of this analysis grapples with the ethics of encounter, an ethics best articulated by the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, described below.

Ethics of encounter

As Peter Benson and Kevin Lewis O'Neill propose (2007), Levinas provides a framework for addressing many of the questions of responsibility and justice within ethnographic fieldwork as well as in its subsequent representation. Like Freire, Levinas grounds his thinking in questions about what it means to be fully human. Across a number of essays, particularly *Humanism of the Other* (2005), *Totality and Infinity* (1969), and *Entre Nous* (1998), Levinas speaks of authentic Being as a relational process that requires face-to-face encounters. This notion helps to frame intergroup relationships within facilitation as well as in its documentation. In social identity theory, the capitalized Other marks the boundary between ingroup and outgroup; the Other is the 'stranger' that locates the self. But according to Levinas, the other with a small 'o' defines the ethical self; one comes into full Being through response to and responsibility for the other. Thus, one way of viewing the process of theatrical facilitation is moving from a differentiating Otherness that affirms the righteousness of the ingroup, towards an ethical encounter with the other, that develops the authentic self. The face-to-face and group-to-group encounter also allows for comparative evaluations, the opportunity to make visible the dispositions and habits of mind that govern beliefs about what is 'right' and 'wrong' – to see individual behavior as socially influenced. Encounters can make visible the national master narratives that shore up a sense of ingroup solidarity, and reveal the possible contradictions in those narratives, to generate a

Freirian *conscientização* that is a step towards building a different kind of ethical community.

Levinas also poses a challenge to writing about theatrical encounters. Whether I have coordinated or observed these encounters, I am aware of a responsibility to witness without trying to reduce a situation or group of people to my own 'understanding'. 'You internationals can't understand', one theatre artist in Mostar reminded me in a conversation, underlining both my privilege and lack. My status as a Croatian-American did not in any way provide access to the lived situation in Mostar during the war. I could not 'empathize', could not *know* the feelings and fears described by the artist as 'existential and chronic' – a feeling that he ate with, slept with, and woke up with on a daily basis. I can witness. I can report. I can frame within what Benson and O'Neil propose to be the 'gift' of the witnessing scholar, 'a combination of thick description, eye-witnessing, and radical juxtaposition based on cross-cultural insight' (2007: 50). But I cannot enter into a dialogic relationship with the goal of full comprehension. On the other hand, being alive to moments 'in which one's own knowledge and experience, design and control are challenged', Benson and O'Neill suggest, allows for a fuller consciousness born out of Levinasian ethics, 'the recognition of one's responsibility to others *and* the impossibility of ever exhausting that responsibility' (2007: 45). This draws me up against two main challenges of engaging in and writing about theatrical facilitation.

Between 'aesthetics of suffering' and 'dramaturgy of hope'

In creating and documenting theatrical facilitations in conflict regions, one must steer between what Julie Salverson frames as an 'aesthetics of suffering', preoccupied with loss and thus privileging 'trauma as mode of knowledge' (2001: 122), and with constructing what I term a 'dramaturgy of hope' that avoids the realities of conflict, a tendency that Laura Edmondson eloquently addresses in a *TDR* essay 'On Sugarcoating and Hope' (2007). It is a tendency that I have often struggled with in both producing and assessing the efficacy of theatrical facilitations I have been part of or witnessed.

I began this chapter with the story of Jelena in Varaždin. Jelena had imagined herself alone in Sarajevo killing Serbian Četniks. My co-director Sabrina Peck and I had given space to this kind of imaginary as a way to avoid the aesthetics of suffering. We had worked to sustain distance between traumatic experience and its expression, to acknowledge the past but also to envision the future. We had not directed that future vision towards a utopian imaginary, and many visions were

simple and concrete: being with family, drawing cartoons, becoming a computer expert or a dentist. But towards the end of the show, all of the participants offered a few words about what they most deeply hoped for in the future. Jelena had never before rehearsed this moment, never shared her vision. Within the performance, however, she stepped forward for the first time, crossing the boundary between actors and audience, moving to rather than gesturing towards the latter. 'Mir', she stated. 'Peace.' Jelena fleetingly and spontaneously pierced through an oppositional national identification. She stepped across the imaginary line separating theatre from audience, performers from witnesses, imagined representation from social reality, and uttered a different idea of being together.

The moment felt remarkable.

But does relating this story here, or as I have done in the past for a large Introduction to Theatre class, construct a problematic dramaturgy of hope? Yes, if I merely end it here. However important it may be to acknowledge that Jelena's gesture animated a performative utopia, enacting a different idea of being together for a group that had gone through a devastating war, and a difficult rehearsal process, my own gesture in relating this story is not enough. I must also acknowledge the possibility that I am not merely relating, but actually constructing that performative utopia, which according to Dolan arises from an in-the-moment collective rather than after-the-fact critical affirmation. How does one (in many ways) tell the difference, tell differently? How might fruitful moments of theatrical facilitation be rescued from 'sugarcoating'?

I argue here for a more transparent recognition of authority – who tells a story, how, and to what ends. In this case, I do so to mark the accumulation of a series of transformative moments within the theatre-making process, to point towards the potential for performance to constitute the possibility of thinking otherwise, and of doing so publicly. Yet, I would like to avoid the general tendency to settle on narratives of hope or reiterations of suffering that reduce the complexities of inter-group encounter and sustain problematic narratives of victimization. I strive for a dialectical modality that attends to and respects the needs of multiple audiences: scholars, participants, and readers. The ethical archiving of theatrical facilitation in conflict situations must grapple with how to move between articulating hope and witnessing pain, while noting who benefits from various narrative constructions. Who profits from figuring 'the Balkans' as chronically sundered, or Israelis and Palestinians as oppositionally related? What experiences might

complicate these figurations, and what situations allow for the animation of counter-narratives? An enunciated vision of 'peace' must work through – with participants – the dissonant realities of ethnic cleansing; power asymmetries; competing accounts of historical rights, claims to justice, recognition, and access to resources; and the non-neutrality of the facilitator who can never fully understand.

In the following chapters, I have tried to stay alive to the moments of dissonance and disorientation, as well as to document that praxis with and in the work of others. I have arrived at whatever insights I share here through innumerable encounters and dialogues, in 5am conversations in a darkened attic room in Mostar, early morning Internet planning sessions, as well as through journal publications and conference talks: through formal presentations and informal exchanges, but always in dialogue. Ideally, the writing at times models the work itself, reflecting the dialogical performance that bring self and other together so that they may continue to question, debate, and challenge one another.

Within this dialogical frame, my most important interlocutors have been my Balkans artistic partner Scot McElvany, Seeds of Peace co-facilitator Wesley Days, and Israeli/Palestinian interactivist, Chen Alon. Their projects, conducted with and without my participation, form key case studies in this book. Their conversations, encouragements, dissenting opinions, and raised eyebrows have helped make meaning, and forge more questions, out of over a decade of theatrical facilitations. I move into mapping these memories and projects with their collaborations and questions in mind, alongside an array of others – scholars, participants, and artists – who have propelled and deepened the ongoing inquiry marked in the following pages. I do so with the hopes that these archives and analytics will inform their own ongoing research, writing, and performance.

Chapter organization

I organize chapters by chronology, location, and methods of theatrical facilitation, from site-specific community performance, to museum installation, to interactive workshops, concluding with an inquiry into the facilitation process itself. Theatrical events take place in the wreckage of a hotel and on the streets of Mostar; in a Berlin museum and hotels across South East Europe; in the El Khader Town Hall, an abandoned house in the Palestinian village of Shoufa, and a community center in Yeruham, Israel; and in the former trophy room of Powhatan Camp in Maine. None of the events take place in a theatre building,¹⁶

instead generating aesthetic spaces through acts of embodied representation and witnessing. Most do take place in or near divided, or formerly divided, cities: Mostar, Berlin, Jerusalem. The ways that bridges, walls, and borders are constructed, contested, destroyed, and rebuilt helps to frame relationships among theatre, space, and nation formation. Each chapter works through a different set of question about how national identity, ethical community, and ideas about justice, human rights, and citizenship are negotiated through various procedures of theatrical animation.

Chapter 2, *Balkan Bridges: Re-membering Mostar (1995–2000)*, details and assesses several site-specific performance projects conducted in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, most of which I co-created. This chapter focuses on theatrical production as a place of remembering. After the break-up of the tenuously constructed Yugoslav state in the early 1990s, urban youth in and around Mostar experienced traumatic and often violent reformations of their socio-ethnic identities. I argue that theatre-making operated as a ritual of community reformation, a site of public testimony and witness, and an archive of and against amnesias. Performances on a street in east Mostar, in a youth center on Mostar's west side, and in a bombed out hotel on the former frontline attest to the affective, semiological, and geoethnographic potency of performance in this city's haunted history.

Chapter 3, *Between The Lines: Staging 'the Balkans' through Berlin (2001)*, moves from the streets of Mostar to an institutional space of culture in Berlin, from theatrical performance to installation, and towards more expansive counter-memories. In a city struggling with how to remember without replicating its own traumatic past, I co-created an installation and performance with youth from Southeastern Europe in Berlin's *Haus der Kulturen der Welt* (House of World Cultures). German and European Union money funded this and later *Between-The-Lines* projects for the expressed purpose of 'integrating' and imaginatively remapping the Balkans as 'South East Europe' – defined as the former Yugoslav states, Romania, Hungary, Kosova, and Albania. Theories of exhibitionary display and social psychological studies ground this assessment of how ethnic and cultural identity works within and potentially ruptures its institutional container. This chapter additionally investigates participatory citizenship in theatrical seminars that intersect with the construction of a supranational EU identity, a project in tension with how 'the Balkans' have continued to define a more 'civilized' European center through a geographic and cultural location on the periphery.

Chapter 4, *Border Zones: Theatrical Mobilizations of the Middle East* (2004–08), moves from performances that rely for their full impact on audience witnesses to theatrical facilitations in workshop settings. The focus here also shifts to a territory more charged with competing narratives of place, ownership, and identity, and facilitation tactics grounded in theories of polarized encounter and political alliance. This chapter also refers more to work that I have witnessed rather than practiced. Thus, I draw on my own work with Seeds of Peace youth in Jerusalem as well as three additional case studies: (1) School for Peace ‘stereotype skits’ adopted in peer facilitation sessions to draw out perceptions of the Other; (2) Viewpoints, an Israeli/Palestinian theatre group that works with youth, generating interactive scenarios related to the conflict; and (3) the Combatants for Peace theatre group formed with adult participants from an activist organization for Israeli soldiers who refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories and Palestinian resistance fighters now committed to nonviolent tactics. The chapter addresses the possibilities as well as the limitations of employing theatrical facilitation to transform and complicate the polarized conflict scenario.

Chapter 5, ‘Facilitation Praxis: Four Modes of Encounter’, re-examines the situational effectiveness of various modes of theatrical encounter in the Balkans and Middle East. I reframe and add to the case studies discussed in the previous chapters through the lens of facilitation. I detail and assess four distinct models of facilitation: (1) as community building in the Balkans; (2) as polarized encounter; (3) as cultural capacity development in the Middle East; and (4) as disorientation at Seeds of Peace. I conclude by readdressing the questions and terms that frame this study, asserting the possibilities and complications of moving from nation formation towards ethical community.

2

Balkan Bridges: Re-Membering Mostar (1995–2000)

It was a place to do something together, to meet people, to cross borders, and hear what others think through theatre.

—Ana

You wanted us to improvise and be free. I didn't get it until the very end; I was too much in the borders. You wanted us to play with the people around us. I guess that's theatre.

—Meša

There are no Bosnians anymore. There are only Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, and Others. I am one of the Others.

—Danijel

Ana, Meša, and Danijel offer differing points of view on social identity in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. While Ana and Meša cite theatre as a place to cross and transcend various borders, to encounter 'others', Danijel is troubled by the very articulation of new borders of social identities. He disidentifies from a specific ethnoreligious belonging, claiming instead to be 'Other', an identity that is not oppositional but rather outside of the newly reformed identity categories he cites.¹ Danijel also recalls a past unification of 'Bosnians' that is conjured only to mark its disappearance: 'There are no Bosnians anymore.' All three youth are from Mostar, and all participated as performers or writers in theatrical productions designed not only to cross physical and ideological borders, but also to examine their construction.

I focus here less on negotiating intergroup conflict than on examining how those groups are constituted and expanded, while grappling



Figure 2.1 Map of Yugoslav Republics on the Balkan peninsula

with the impact of this conflict on the youth with whom I worked. Like the Seeds of Peace participants in Ohrid, Macedonia, the youth in Mostar became more attuned to how national sentiment was produced and exploited through the performances we created together. They also began to understand themselves as civic agents who could act with, and against, that production of national sentiment. That is, the youth responded to a political construction of ethnic nationalism with civic participation, reanimating public space, regenerating a more expansive ingroup, and forging ways to re-member together the places that they lived.

In this chapter I propose that collaboratively created performances within and near Mostar operated as a response to active forgetting. These performances generated a restorative archive that embodied a set of testimonies and counter-memories, challenging the production of ethnically segregated collective memories in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Maurice Halbwachs has argued that the production of collective memory is neither static nor organic, but maintained through continuous reproduction (1992 [1925]). Thus, civic groups may also reconstruct what otherwise disappears or gets mediated through an event narrative too often focused on victimization or unqualified hope.² Collaboratively created theatre can operate as an act of collective

remembering, embodying civic discourse and generating multiple active publics rather than one passive constituency, thus reducing the potential for violent conflict between polarized groups.

I organize this chapter through a set of stories and counter-narratives, describing four theatrical projects and documenting the processes by which these projects animated new narratives of community. I particularly examine relationships among place, memory, and identity. After these more hopeful dramaturgies, and inquiries into their effectiveness, I introduce an archive of failures – productive misunderstandings, and sometimes traumatic ruptures that haunt the stories of ‘success’, complicating and complementing narratives of nation formation and conflict transformation. Each of these theatrical performances and processes function in distinct ways as viewed through the taxonomic lens proposed by James Thompson and Richard Schechner (as alleviation, testimony, accusation, action, and entertainment). Their effectiveness in remapping borders, iterating new modes of social belonging, animating community – remembering the past, reconstituting the present, and re-envisioning the future – all relied upon different ways of mobilizing memory in relation with each other, to the place of performance, and to various witnessing audiences. The bulk of these performances occurred in Mostar, a newly divided city that I will account for through a series of spatially informed narrative palimpsests.

Introducing Mostar

Over the past several decades, Mostar has been conspicuously reproduced by state and civic mappings, pedestrian remappings, and externally mediated accounts. In this mid-sized city encased by the rocky hills of Hercegovina and split by the copper-green Neretva River, graffiti serves as a kind of civic record, replete with the dispersed possibilities of multiple interpreted meanings. ‘*Ovo je Mostar!*’ announces writing on a crumbling wall by the river’s east bank in a seemingly obvious statement of fact: ‘This is Mostar!’ Yet what ‘is’ Mostar, as a set of landmarks and competing social narratives, has been recently revised. The graffiti here takes on a heteroglossic tinge – meaning one thing to the original writer (‘this city is Mostar’) another to me (this inscription, these ruins, define ‘Mostar’), and accruing still more meanings in the context of Mostar’s ongoing historic revision. There is some inscription on and about the city that has outlasted its referents.

On both sides of the river, representations of the Stari Most – a centuries-old bridge built under Ottoman rule – mark the bridge’s

absence. Destroyed by forces within the city during the 1990s war, the bridge remains a disputed physical and symbolic emblem. Before a European consortium had rebuilt the blasted Stari Most in 2004, a fragment from the Old Bridge stood at one end of a rickety chain link passage built high over the fast-flowing Neretva. It was emblazoned with a message: 'Don't Forget'. The block served as a paradoxical reminder without a clear object. How and what one should resist forgetting in and about Mostar remains key to negotiating the city in particular, and national sentiment more generally in 'the Balkans'.

I have written in the past of Mostar as a ghost town, haunted by a history of cultural divisions and intersections, by an ongoing sense of 'used-to-be', by a devastating internecine war that arose from seemingly nowhere, by a flow of refugees into and out of the city's hillside homes, and the revising of its broader national connections to Yugoslavia, the Ottoman Empire, or Eastern Europe (1998; 2005). This city in southwestern Bosnia-Herzegovina, now physically and culturally divided along increasingly hardened ethno-religious lines, has a recently rebuilt Old Bridge, but sustains an ongoing negotiation between memory and forgetting.

This negotiation is not an uncommon way of producing national sentiment, particularly of narratives that rationalize the past and reconcile the present. The 1990s Balkan wars were fueled by selective acts of recall, particularly the manipulation of historical traumas, such as the slaughters perpetuated by Croatian fascist groups in the early 1940s, used to rationalize contemporary acts of violent ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This ethnic cleansing, which produced hundreds of thousands of refugees, proceeded not only through a removal of people, but also through an obliteration of cultural memory: the destruction of mosques, Turkish architecture, and less often, Orthodox churches, and Catholic cathedrals. To wipe out a past of living together in Bosnia, in a place that had at one time harbored a largely secular, mixed and inter-married ethnic population, memory too had to be actively 'cleansed'.

I mentioned in the previous chapter that where the work of nation formation is to construct a more unified, singular narrative, the work of theatrical facilitation is, in part, to deconstruct or perhaps to multiply that narrative – to collectively re-member events and places and thus to reconstruct narratives of identity that can seem artificially divisive. According to psychologist Helene Lorenz (2005), counter-memory can replace the fantasy of an ethnically unified national history, opening spaces for more agonistic civic dialogue. As Ana put it, the theatre can provide a way to 'do something together, to meet people, to cross borders, and hear what others think.'

But before returning to Mostar and performances in and of the city, I'd like to travel back to Varaždin, to the only project I worked on that was conducted prior to the December 2005 Dayton Accords and formal cessation of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The theatrical process here illuminates how performance operates as a technology of memory in a traumatic situation, and as a site for generating new narratives of self and community. As a refugee site, Varaždin also provides a broader framework to engage the dynamics of nation formation and conflict in 'the Balkans'.

DRAMATURGIES OF HOPE

Theatre and alleviation in Varaždin

I remember my disorientation upon entering the volunteers' bedroom in Varaždin's Camp Two where I would be staying for three weeks. Project co-director Sabrina Peck and I had walked from the train station down softly lit avenues to the camp with our Suncokret host, Darko Grupče. Entering our bedroom felt like walking into M*A*S*H. Several people gathered under a light bulb smoking cigarettes; a thin grey blanket draped on a frayed rope separated a group of scattered army cots from the kitchen area. As I familiarized myself with the camp, I learned that we volunteers inhabited a relatively privileged space. Most families had been in the camp for months, confined to a six-by-six foot area of bunked beds, separated from others by hanging sheets. Most of the residents, refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina or eastern Slavonia in Croatia, had been violently displaced by the Yugoslav National Army or rogue Serbian nationalist forces, and had traveled with almost nothing from their homes. Décor was minimal and the air thick with the anxiety of waiting, waiting. Hot plates smuggled in to boil water for coffee were luxury items. Yet, the coffee, ground by hand and cooked up in thick, black doses, fueled sociality and provided a sense of cultural connection and reanimated civility, whilst also offering a respite from three meals a day of bread, bread, and bread, occasionally enhanced by butter, cheese, and soup.

While Sabrina Peck and I conducted structured workshops and rehearsals in Varaždin, we learned a great deal about the people in the camp and the context of the conflict in these shakily constructed bedrooms – as well as in local bars and cafes – sitting over endless cups of Bosnian coffee. In the camp, we spent hours with residents like one I will call Zana, a former economist with the former Bosnian

government. Zana's story features elements common to many of the camp's residents: as a middle-class, secular, urban intellectual who had considered herself 'Bosnian' or 'Yugoslav', Zana was now relocated in the camp as a 'Muslim refugee'. As related to us, her flight had been preceded by a period of anxiety, sleeping in the garden with her most valued possessions wrapped around her body. Without any payment for the job she continued to perform, she sold these objects one by one, along with other pieces of her home. Her dispossession was consummated through a violent beating by Bosnian Serb forces – motivated by their own anxieties of displacement. She had arrived in the camp with one bag containing the items most precious to her: photos, a few pieces of clothing, and a richly carved copper coffee grinder and four delicate porcelain cups, which we sipped from as we attended to her narrative. In the camp, Zana's yearnings for the past were rooted less in longing for home or place, and more in the craving for existential meaning and a less confining social identity. 'Only to eat and sleep is not enough', she repeated time and again, as did most of the camp residents. 'We are so much more than refugees.'

Zana's yearnings differ from what Stephen Legg, in 'Memory and Nostalgia', ascribes to the 'incurable modern condition' of migration, related to a longing for an idea of home that no longer or sometimes never existed (2005: 100). The refugee's nostalgia – literally home (*nostos*) longing (*algia*) – is more devoid of choice, and attached to a need to construct a new social narrative. Zana's 'home', the place within which she lived, had been quite literally taken apart to sustain her living within the conditions of a war economy. She had begun to lose her home before she had been exiled from it. She had little place for nostalgia, for looking back towards a particular past, instead concentrating her energies on moving out of the condition of unfulfilled being where she now felt located. Unlike the Russian exiles Svetlana Boym writes about in *the Future of Nostalgia*, who construct rooms in Brighton Beach filled with souvenirs (2001: 327), Bosnian refugees in Croatia had only the bare minimum of memory objects. Their temporary living areas in the camp were marked as much by the absence of such items as by their presence. Though what *was* there, such as coffee grinders and cups, evoked particular cultural attachments, the absence of objects also pointed towards the residents' often traumatic dislocations, and their inability to carry much with them.

Legg notes a link between nostalgia and trauma: 'while nostalgia denotes a positive attachment to a past real or imaginary home, trauma denotes the negative inability to deal effectively with a past

event' (2005: 103). I argue that theatre provides a way to 'deal more effectively' with past events through metaphorical means, working to avoid the replication of trauma through its direct representation. In the space of the camp, an in between space of no-longer-home and not-yet-elsewhere, we created a performance that worked to navigate nostalgia and contain trauma, striving to generate new narratives of belonging and modes of being.

We worked with about twenty participants, aged 16–25, to generate a collaboratively created piece through past reflection on home, representation of life in the camp, and future envisioning beyond their status of refugees. The shape we arrived at asked the questions, 'Where are you from?' 'Where are you now?' and 'Where are you going?' with responses expressed through physical metaphor, ensemble movement, sound, and music, all produced by participants.

The question format of *Odakle Ste?* (Where are you from?) derived from participants who asked that we focus not only on the past, but also on the future. This expressed desire and the resultant questions guided workshops that in exploring the past, focused less on events than on place. While we did not ask participants to discuss their experience of the war, many details about that experience arose from the participants themselves, informing the visual and aural environment of the performance. The sounds and smells of 'home' thus evoked not only 'vinegar', 'horses', 'home-baked bread', and 'people laughing', but also 'grenades' and 'bombs destroying my house'. In reflecting on 'where they were from', participants spoke of 'wood industries' as well as 'a town that is now completely destroyed' and a place that 'now has cows and chickens in the roads', referencing the influx of displaced rural villagers into Bosnian cities. Responses about the past evidenced various kinds of nostalgia, for that which could not exist in the camp ('home-baked bread') to towns that no longer existed – that had been destroyed or transformed into places of 'sadness' and 'shadows'.

Boym marks a distinction between 'restorative' nostalgia concentrated on the reconstruction of lost home (*nostos*) and often associated with nation formation, and 'reflective' nostalgia, focused less on physical or symbolic reconstruction than on building affective connections (*algia*). 'If restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialize time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space' (2001: 49). Boym's spatial terminology implies materialization, the use of objects to mark and preserve immaterial memories, as opposed to the use of memory to alter reality. Her language of 'cherish'

versus 'conquer' also seems to privilege the mode of relational reflection over restoration. And in many ways the camp residents deployed reflection as a reaction to how restorative nostalgia had been used to justify the 'ethnic cleansing', the forced movement of bodies, that had produced them as refugees in the first place. Additionally, other than through rituals of coffee-making, the camp residents had little opportunity to spatially construct a sense of national belonging, particularly when that 'national belonging' for Bosnian Muslims was so recently produced, and so violently and externally construed. But theatre allowed for a way to put together some reflective fragments of memory, to positively temporalize the space of the camp with a set of emotionally complex reflections about lost home.

In one performance moment a young Mostarian man sang of the desire for the refugee to return home, '*Kod Kući Vratim*'. The song's lyrics expressed a yearning to live 'just one more day', to 'see just one more sun' in the homeland. Accompanied by movements derived from the journeys that participants had taken to arrive in Varaždin, the moment theatricalized and contained a reflective nostalgia that drew the performing and audience community together through an embodied recall of displacement.

At the same time, the rehearsal process illuminated and at times exacerbated subgroup differences marked by class and educational status as well as by ethnonational identity. A community center in Varaždin served the often better-educated and better-off refugees who lived in private residences with Croatian relatives. The Camp residents, in contrast, had less access to education, fewer material belongings, and less to do. The rehearsal process enabled a temporary negotiation of differences; town participants overcame fears to cross into the camp and camp residents agreed to work with the group that they initially termed 'stuck up'. We finally performed *Odakle Ste?* with both groups in the Women's Center of Camp Two, with an audience representative of both populations who actively integrated themselves into the performance. Several of our older friends helped to prepare the stage area, moving weaving looms, sweeping the floor, and arranging chairs. The unembellished, level architecture of the room further contributed to the audience's integration, allowing for little separation from the performers. The audience of camp residents, Suncokret workers, and relatives of the youth who lived in town filled the space fully ten minutes before the start of the performance. They watched quietly as the cast participated together in a warm up, attended to the performance, and joined in the final song, which bled into a more open-ended participatory musical festival spilling into a late-night party.

The performance united participants as well as audience members, allowing options for how they chose to participate. One of the more reluctant performers became invested in the production by arriving an hour before the show and then accompanying songs on the guitar. Another who had decided not to perform took charge of lighting and handing out programs. The performance proved a culminating event in many ways, as Suncokret ended short-term volunteer work with our performance. Our host, Darko, described the piece, perhaps nostalgically, to me as the best event in his time in Suncokret. Borders between town and camp, international volunteers and local residents, audience and performers, seemed to dissolve in the moment of performance. A feeling of 'one-ness' permeated the space, a feeling that anthropologist Victor Turner refers to as *communitas*, a time when external status structures momentarily dissipate through the social bonding of ritual or play (1982: 45–46). Though this feeling is temporary, and can cover over dissent and difference, it offers a moment of future possibility and respite from the anxieties of dislocation.

My Croatian father had wondered what theatre could possibly offer to refugees in the war. Didn't they need to satisfy far more basic needs of security, food, shelter? In describing social theatre as a mode of alleviation, James Thompson and Richard Schechner assert that people in crisis need not only peace, food, and shelter, but also 'to understand and deal with what has happened' (2004: 15). Theatre can provide that space for understanding through generating an aesthetic container for reflective nostalgia, while also providing an opportunity to do something in the space of waiting. 'Only to sleep and eat is not enough,' Zana continued to remind us. The theatre provided a space for meaning-making beyond those basic requirements. As one participant attested after the single evening's performance, 'I felt a change in the camp tonight. Where there was heaviness it is now light.'

It's a tidy story and true in its way. But this rendition of the performance deliberately operates as a 'dramaturgy of hope', eliding for the moment the mistakes, illness, exhaustion, and misunderstandings that permeated the theatre-making process. It does so in order to temporarily mark the possibilities of performance as collective regeneration. In order to more carefully investigate the blind spots of facilitation, what and who can be left out of that collective process, I will later detail some of the ruptures in the process. But for now I relate another more hopeful story, this one steeped in the possibilities of theatre as testimony.

Theatre as testimony around Mostar

Odakle Ste provided refugee camp residents with a form to creatively and collectively put together fragmented memories, to work against more divisive nation formations with a group of participants mixed across social status and ethnoreligious identity. The audience for this project was largely from the camp itself; their attentive response indicated a resonance with the stories told and songs sung rather than any revelations about those stories. This kind of communal connection had its place in the camp. Yet after the war formally concluded in late 1995, rifts remained among newly redefined 'Muslim', 'Serb', and 'Croat' populations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and between these populations and outsiders to the region, for whom the conflict was often mediated through a narrative of 'ancient ethnic hatreds'. A production with Mostarians for German youth at a summer camp near Mostar, and back within the city, forged a space for testimony, witness, and reflections on what it might mean to be Mostarian after the city had been newly divided.

Remembering Mostar in Croatia (1996)

Mostar's division characterizes many of the dynamics that forged oppositional ethnonational identities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As a multi-ethnic city located in Herzegovina, a region dominated in the early 1990s by the Bosnian Croat-led Croatian Defense Force (HVO), Mostar bore the brunt of two violent power struggles. In 1992, Bosnians with both Croatian Catholic and Muslim affiliations fought together against self-identified Bosnian Serb forces. Shortly thereafter, the HVO turned against Muslims in the city, destroying the Stari Most and resettling the city through an orchestrated campaign of terror. The destruction of the bridge, which connected old east Mostar from its newer areas in the west, effectively created and sustained a division between 'Bosnian Muslims' and 'Bosnian Croats', making it particularly difficult for any 'Bosnian Serbs' to remain in the city. The division also hardened ethnic identities that had been more fluid before the war. As the bridge collapsed, so too did marriages, friendships, and families. Teenagers in particular suffered difficult choices, sometimes having to move in with one parent or another, fight on the frontline against former friends, or witness the death of others.

Scot McElvany had arrived in Mostar as a volunteer youth worker in 1996, only a few years after the city's division. Over the course of the year, he developed a series of theatre projects, many supported by the youth center where he worked, the aptly named Mladi Most (Youth



Figure 2.2 Stari Most under reconstruction

Photo: Sonja Arsham Kuftevec.

Bridge). The center tried to bridge differences among youth in the city, functioning as a safe house for those who had been friends until the war had placed them on opposite sides of a recent divide. But this work was becoming increasingly difficult. Gathering 'Muslim' and 'Croat' youth together threatened civic forces advocating for ethnonational division. Nationalist Bosnian Croats attacked the Mladi Most center with rocks and even gunfire. According to an email from McElvany, one Croat nationalist held a hand grenade, threatening to throw it at the center while shouting, 'There'll be no new Yugoslavia here!' (1996b).

The Center countered this effort to sustain divisions in the city, and collapse it into a Greater Croatia, by forging relationships among youth outside of this violent context. So in the summer of 1996, Mladi Most collaborated with a German youth organization, Schüler Helfen Leben (SHL), to create a theatre camp in the Croatian coastal town of Žuljana. The camp brought together teenagers from within and outside of Mostar while exposing German youth to the realities of the Balkan

war, which most had heard of only through mediated accounts. Theatre thus provided a site for Mostarians to testify and Germans to witness to their experience.

The presence of German youth also prompted negotiations of difference and unity among the Mostarians. The Mostarians attended the camp for free, while the German youth had paid for the 'experience' of meeting Bosnian youth. Language differences and interests also contributed to separations between the two groups at mealtimes and leisure hours. Both groups additionally complained that the other was completely incapable of making decent coffee. Thus, while divided in Mostar, when faced with an even more 'Othered' group, the Mostarians grew unified through their opposition to the Germans. Many of these social dynamics played out through collaboratively generated theatre projects, which served as superordinate objectives that brought together the Mostarians in particular.

Some of the Mostarian participants were initially skeptical about these projects; they had stood with arms crossed watching an early English-language performance I had co-created with McElvany, English artist Kathy Tasker, and some Mostarian and German youth in the camp. Then McElvany initiated a second performance with visiting UN peacekeeping soldiers on the theme of waiting. As the work delved into complex issues of the past several years, a few Mostar teens approached McElvany about creating a project of their own. A Bosnian Serb I'll call Serpan, who had wanted nothing to do with theatre-making, was the first to speak. 'We like what you're doing, and we want to show we're involved too.' He then issued a challenge to McElvany. 'We want you to help us make something of our experiences in the war' (McElvany, 1996a).³

It was now McElvany's turn for skepticism. Having worked for several months at Mladi Most, watching teens surfeit on pirated Sylvester Stallone movies, he worried about creating a testosterone-fueled action theatre that ignored the complex impacts of the war. Typically, youth at the center would either avoid memories of the war or transform moments of violence into scenarios featuring themselves as braggart heroes. He also understood that the Mostarians saw the piece as a challenge to the Germans, a way to show-off their 'war experience'. So McElvany proceeded cautiously, with exercises that approached the past through daily experience rather than moments of violent threat, and with the caveat that the German youth could participate if they liked. The Mostarians agreed, but rehearsals soon became so intense that the German participants felt that they could better serve the production as witnesses.

McElvany began rehearsals by inviting the Mostarian participants to think of questions they had asked themselves during the war. The youth then combined these questions with an exercise in which they used water to mime simple daily activities. Serpan crouched down over the water bowl and slapped water to his face in the gesture of smoking. He looked up, paused, and asked, 'Why did I lose my brother...do you know why?' No one moved for several moments. Then Ejdo, a Bosnian Croat now living on the west side of Mostar, rose, threw water in the air as a soccer ball, kicking it angrily, and bellowed, 'Why do I live here?' A charged stillness reigned as Ejdo sat down and murmured that he couldn't continue.

McElvany stopped the workshop. In a reversal of the common rhetoric of community-based theatre, the participants had to 'empower' the facilitator to continue. Ejdo looked to Serpan, the acknowledged leader of the group. With a nod from Serpan, and reflection amongst themselves, the youth decided they wanted to continue. 'This is the only way we're going to do this together', insisted Serpan. And in a piece explicitly representing the experience of a war centered on ethnic differentiation, the 'Croat', 'Serb', and 'Muslim' participants never distinguished themselves ethnically through either text or performance.⁴ Instead the youth worked together to explore their responses to the violence, to the fears of a 'dirty' and 'stupid' war in condensed textual exercises, spoken in their own language. Perhaps nostalgically, they remembered a past unity that had been destroyed. 'Before this war we did not care about religion, it was only important that we were together.' They also pondered causation and impact, such as 'the brother that this war took away'.

The performance put together texts created from these questions as well as prompts about moments of security, paired with movements generated from daily activities. The piece thus worked to concretize and juxtapose the everyday alongside the violently disorienting, offering ways of containing trauma through conjuring spaces of shelter and safety – far removed from the action movie tropes towards which the youth had originally been drawn. Called *Podrum* (Basement), the piece depicted the dual senses of confinement and comfort offered by the basements to which Mostarians retreated during the shelling of their city. In a final scene, Hajdi, a Bosnian Muslim living on the city's 'Croatian' west side, told of her time in the basement: 'During the shelling of the town, we had been sitting in the basement and we hadn't seen a single spot of light in the dark of the war. We heard only screams, grenades, and crying. One of my friends took out a guitar and started

to play, and we sang so loud that we did not hear the noise, grenades, screams.' In the performance, she turned to the rest of the actors, huddled together in a circle, and together they sang a song popular during the war, '*Volim Te*' ('I Love You'), reiterating the force of collective performance to overcome divisive fears.

Though the Germans in the audience could not literally understand all of the narrative, spoken in both Bosnian and English, they responded to the emotional impact of its performance. After the group performed the piece the Germans stood in stunned silence. One German audience member spoke of how the performance offered a 'frame of understanding' to what had gone on in Mostar. Another, Michael Schmitt, shared with me that the embodied juxtapositions of the everyday and the reflective narrations offered a way to understand more than when someone talked about the war. Mladi Most volunteer Shin Yasui recalled, 'At the end of the play, no one moved. Some of them cried. Others held hands and shoulders. It was just beyond words' (1996).

Spoken word activist Sekou Sundiata refers to such moments as 'deep witnessing', internalized thoughtfulness that contrasts with the 'rubber-necking' gazes of spectators at a disaster that seems physically close yet emotionally distant (2007). I think two dimensions of the performance cultivated this deep witnessing. First, the internal explorations of the Mostarian youth communicated through unsentimental juxtapositions of everyday actions and extraordinary questions. This juxtaposition produced an intimate resonance de-sensationalized from mass media coverage of the war. Additionally, the shared connections among the youth developed through the process of theatre-making deepened their responses beyond mere spectatorship.

In *Aftermath*, philosopher Susan J. Brison emphasizes the importance of storytelling in relation to traumatic events, particularly when reformulated through artistic means. 'Narrative facilitates the ability to go on by opening up possibilities for the future through retelling stories of the past' (2002: 104). Collectively relating stories of past violent division offered yet another layer of active alleviation. Having been witnesses *to* rather than spectators *of* those stories significantly deepened their impact.

Through the acts of testimony and witness, the performance also further broke down barriers between the Mostarians and Germans. After several moments of silence, Serpan – who had been the most resistant to interacting with the Germans – gathered the spectators and participants together for a group 'howl' in peace, an expression that remained 'beyond words', but one formulated together. That night, according

to McElvany, the camp participants physically realigned themselves, 'many new circles formed' of people from Mostar and Germany singing songs together. And many of the Germans said this experience gave them a window to peer through and begin understanding what had gone on in Mostar.' 'I felt that everyone became as one' wrote Yasui (1996).

During the *Podrum* process, this moment of one-ness, of *communitas*, occurred in two sites: within the Mostarian group, united through the workshop process, and between the Mostarians and Germans, brought together through the performance and its aftermath. The performance served as a superordinate objective for the Mostarians, and a space of mobilizing empathy for the Germans – a way of recognizing the power of radical passivity and witness as opposed to the impulse to 'do something' for the Bosnians. The movement of *Podrum* from the relatively safe space of Žuljana to the more symbolically and emotionally charged space of Mostar underlines the challenges of rethinking ethnic boundary differences in the city itself. The movement also marks a shift from theatre as testimony to theatre as active community-building in a divided city.

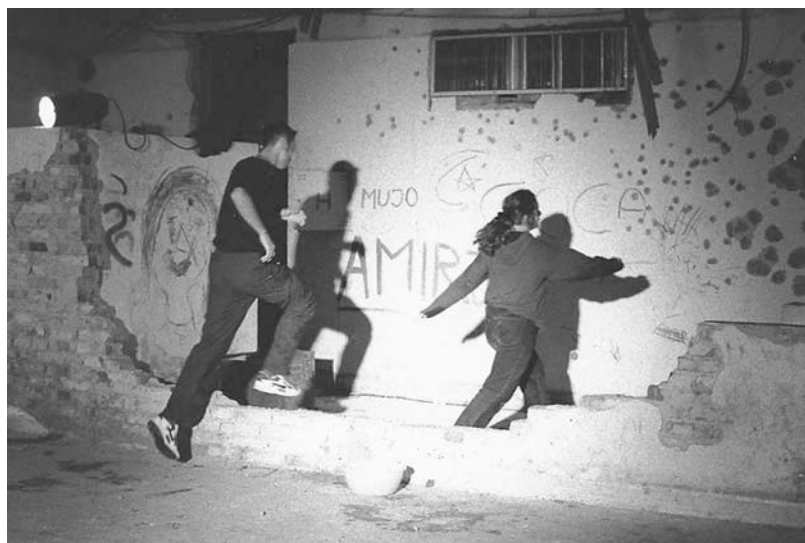


Figure 2.3 *Podrum* in the destroyed Hotel Ruža. The hotel stands close to the newly defined border between west and east Mostar

© Uli Loskot Photography.

Return to Mostar: theatre as communal action (1996)

The *Podrum* cast's next challenge arrived in the form of an invitation to perform the piece back in Mostar at an international youth theatre festival. Within the camp, far away from the city, Bosnian Muslim, Serb, and Croatian youth could work together as Mostarians. Žuljana was removed from the context of Mostar with its constant reminders of ethnic division and threats towards unity. But the city maintained no neutral space, and the festival would unfold on Mostar's 'Muslim' east side. The non-Muslims in the group, who rarely crossed into the east side of the city, were afraid to traverse the bridge from the west; many had been beaten up or verbally abused for crossing sides. After the war, when a group of Muslims marched to a west side graveyard in a parade of mourning, Croatian soldiers shot marchers in the back and riots broke out in the city. Even venturing next door could be dangerous; one Mladi Most worker, a Muslim woman, was attacked and dragged by the hair when she entered her neighbor's yard to retrieve a soccer ball. But Ejdo, a self-defined Bosnian Croat, announced that he would perform, and most of the others followed.

Representations, images, perceptions, and emotions necessarily differed in this new locale. The performers' bodies were now marked by their ethnicity. The city was small enough, and had been divided for long enough, that residents knew by sight who belonged to which 'side' of the city and which ethnoreligious group. The bodies could no longer remain merely 'Mostarian' or 'not-German'. Marked by context, memory, and the consciousness of participants and observers, they now read as 'Croat', 'Muslim', and 'Serb'.

In Mostar, the performance also took on greater contextual meaning. In the outdoor coastal town of Žuljana, the German audience could only imagine the actual experience of war. The performance in Mostar took place in the bombed-out Hotel Ruža, a decayed physical remnant of war in the city (Figure 2.2). The performance space no longer merely represented Mostar during the war, it *was* Mostar – a city literally destroyed by its own factionalism. The broken space quite literally framed *Podrum*. At the same time, the performance reanimated the space with a mixed body of participants, gesturing not only towards a more unified past but also to a possible future. Though reception to the performance was less intense than in Žuljana, festival organizers expressed amazement that a mixed group of participants had performed together publicly for the first time since the war.

Performance in the city operated as testimony to the youths' experience and to their capacity to be together. By doing so, the participants

also proposed a subtle critique of civic politics of division, activating an implicit accusation against official and unofficial politics of division. In remembering together their experiences during the war, they remembered the city as a multiethnic space.

Many of the youth participants expressed excitement about the potential power of performance in Mostar. Kenet Bakamović, a Muslim living on the west side, noted to me 'it's a big thing, like the beginning of theatre from the ashes.' A west-side Croatian youth added, 'nobody knows what we are doing – we should do something more people would see. You cannot do anything if you are hiding. I am ready to go to [the east side].'

Significantly, the young woman did not participate in our next project as she had become too involved in a Croat-only theatre group on Mostar's west side. Yet, the following year several participants from this group and a few others from Mladi Most deepened their exploration of what it might mean to remember and reproduce Mostar, and to do so in a way that moved beyond personal testimony to accusation through allegory. While *Podrum* had communicated the direct experience of participants, *Poštar* (Postman) explored what it might take to reconstruct Mostar as a unified city, to 're-member' the place the youth participants knew before the war. The performance of *Poštar* or *Where Does the Postman Go When All the Street Names Change?* also functioned more acutely as a counter-memory to an official civic discourse of separation, doing so through a series of spatial performances and performatives that reanimated the city, producing one of many narrative palimpsests.

Theatre as accusation and civic action in Mostar

Reintroducing Mostar

The collective memory of a nation is constructed in part by the memorials erected. But in Mostar, it has been the role of international groups to reconstruct the Stari Most, and a conscious narrative of reconciliation, one of many competing ways of framing the city. As evidenced by its frequent evocation in this chapter, it remains difficult to discuss the urban terrain of Mostar without referencing the destruction and reconstruction of the Stari Most, built under Turkish rule in the late 1500s. It is almost as difficult to avoid clichéd statements about the bridge's symbolic resonance. But reviewing the bridge's figuration offers a historiographic overview of how Mostar has been constituted before and after the 1991–95 war and consequent destruction of the bridge.

A state-produced tourist guide to Mostar, written in English in 1989 on the cusp of war within a still nominally unified Yugoslavia, refers to the bridge as 'Mostar's symbol' around which 'the nucleus of the town developed'. The guidebook emphasizes the structure's continuity: 'the Old Bridge has survived to grace the town to the present day [as] a vibrant witness to the past.' Physical location links to structures of feeling; Mostar is cohesive and organic, with the bridge as its nuclear center. The purpose of the bridge appears metaphoric (nuclear), metonymic (symbolic of the city), and anthropomorphic (the bridge as survivor of and witness to history). Significantly, though the bridge figures both as a link to the past and as a unifying locus, its purpose as either a physical or a symbolic connector between two distinct sides of the city is not mentioned. In this prior era of official South Slavic unity and efforts to generate 'Yugoslovenstvo' identity, when many citizens who would now more deliberately identify as Serbs, Croats, Muslims, and Jews lived side by side in Mostar, the city officially imagined itself as a unified whole.

After the 1990s war, and particularly after the Stari Most's destruction, external accounts rewrite the city's heritage as one of divisions bridged. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a key sponsor of the Stari Most's reconstruction, refers to a population that 'saw the bridge as a symbol of peace and reconciliation between the peoples of Bosnia and Hercegovina.' Reconciliation implies something already torn apart. The unified organism imagined by the state-produced guide is read back into history and reconfigured as a link between separate entities: east and west, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Muslim and Croat. The bridge additionally moves onto the (Western) world stage as a way to make sense of a war that implicated, before it directly involved, Europe and the United States. An October 2003 *60 Minutes* piece constructs a fairly typical narrative (Safer, 2003). Before the war, the bridge stands for ethnic unity and integration, linking the east and west banks of the city. During the war, the bridge, 'battered, broken, but still standing', signifies survival, endurance, and the possibility of reconciliation. The destruction of the bridge then signals the collapse of common history, as its reconstruction evokes the possibility of a reintegrated future, 'rebuilding the city's lost past'.

But to focus on the bridge as either an architectural or a symbolic entity that can be physically and historically reconstituted neglects it as a void or site of trauma, a wound in memory surpassing rational understanding and descriptive language, denying the possibility of healing without a scar. The Engineering Workgroup's narrative of events on

its reconstruction website evokes this loss, but does not seem to know how to build it into their reconstructed bridge (Romeo and Mela, n.d.). Michael Ignatieff, a cultural theorist speaking on *60 Minutes*, indirectly acknowledges their flaw, and that of the United States in pushing the bridge's reconstruction as a form of nation building. 'Don't think you can impose reconciliation. Bitterness runs very deep, you can't plaster over that stuff.' Personification of the bridge in various accounts further underlines the trauma suffered by Mostar's citizens. An anonymous comment on Mostar Online, reflecting on the damage done to Mostar during the war, slips between depiction of the city's symbolic rape and the actual destruction of its citizenry. The writer records his inability to document the destruction witnessed, feeling as if he were taking a photo of a woman who had been brutally violated and butchered. He castigates those who would erase these wounds of memory in a blindly optimistic goal of reconciliation. 'Now the foreigners come telling [Mostar's citizens] don't worry, be happy, live together again and be reconciled' (1998). But you can't plaster over this stuff. A rebuilt bridge won't heal a traumatic wound.

The comment catches me still. What is the role of a 'foreigner' like myself driving this narrative of reconciliation? How can facilitation additionally recognize what cannot be healed, narrate the memories of place as well as performance?

Phenomenologists such as Yi Fu Tuan (1977) cite place as space transformed by memories and feelings accrued over time. For Mostarians, the Stari Most embraces a series of attachments, rituals of walking, the feel of stone under feet, the sensation of height over the river below. The violent rupture of those perceptions and relationships, coupled with the material destruction of place, physically and psychically remapped the city producing a void. Yet spaces of crisis may lead to revelation rather than erasure; the collapse of a structure can lay bare its inner workings. Within Mostar's dissolution, the cultural, legal, and political disciplinary systems struggling to forge new identities and histories through the city were rendered visible. At the same time, individual, tactical resistances to these systems emerged, particularly relating to the control over and production of space.⁵

While the bridge's destruction marked a split between 'Muslim' east and 'Croat' west Mostar, social and spatial practices continued to complicate this reading. Inter-marriage, pre-war friendships, and the presence of Muslims in west Mostar, and Bosnian Serbs on both sides, rendered enforced conceptual boundaries more fluid. Spatial practices also continued to defy conceptual mapping as 'Muslim' Mostar and Mostarians

crossed the Neretva, spilling onto the 'Croatian' west side of the bank. Additionally, an urban site on the conceived west draws a different line through the city – the frontline of the war fought between nominally Muslim and Croat forces. This street of bombed-out, crater-marked building shells runs parallel to the Neretva, marking with blood and bullet holes the city's division against itself.

Absences and presences such as these evoke the Derridean notion of *hauntologie* in which present meaning and use are always already haunted by a past, by the attachments of memory (1994). The street once had a very different use value, serving as a main thoroughfare and pedestrian route in the city. By 1997 it stood as a 'no-man's land' a void haunted by the presence of potentially live grenades in its ruins. The former everyday performances that defined the street as a thoroughfare, a route from home to school, ghosts its present decay, just as the shell of a school bus once carrying children of both 'sides' to undivided schools shadows the street, a material sign of both unity and division.

Mladi Most, the youth center where I worked with Scot McElvany, functioned as a resistant oasis to conceived spatial authority. It also led to the production of a theatrical heterotopia that represented, inverted, and reproduced Mostar while simultaneously reflecting on the city's dissolution. This imagined construction of the city, *Poštar* (Postman) or *Where Does the Postman Go When All the Street Names Change?*, premiered at Mostar's International Days of Youth Theatre Festival in August 1997. Presented near the street, outside any officially constituted theatrical places, with selected debris from the city its only stage props, *Poštar* worked to simultaneously engage an actual and a fictional Mostar, reproducing the city through a set of stylistically varied spatial stories.

Reproducing Mostar (1997)

The idea for *Poštar* arose from conversations with youth participants and from a walk in the city. As I stood with McElvany on a small stone bridge overlooking the city's remains, we discussed theatre as a site of remembering, envisioning an original performance that could momentarily put together Mostar for participants and audience. Over several months in 1997, McElvany and I worked with eight youth from Mladi Most and a third collaborator, Geoff Sobelle, to develop a piece that bore witness to the youths' experience while seeking to avoid a replication of their trauma. As architects and facilitators of the project, we worked with the youth to build a performance with a void.

Because of the stronger sociopolitical commentary of the piece, in generative workshops, participants decided that it would be about Mostar

without directly referencing the city or the war that had divided it. A simulacrum, a 'not-Mostar', would take Mostar's place. Like Mostar, this city suffered through an event that changed its geography and interpersonal relationships, and the performance followed life in 'the City' before, during, and after this event that was 'not-the-war'. This mythic Mostar, performed in the 'real' Mostar, evolved around signs of the city and communication within it: maps, street signs, and the delivery of letters, featuring a bemused postman trying to make his way through the renamed landscape.

Though only half an hour in length, the show was aesthetically dense, combining numerous theatrical tools developed over a year of working together with participants. Stylistically, the piece worked to defamiliarize individuals, objects, and signs of power. Actors created archetypal characters, masked figures, transformative images, and enactments of their own histories in a sometimes chaotic mix of the allegorical, expressionist, symbolic, and surreal.⁶ The script incorporated character introductions, original poetry, participants' letters, and a Joseph Brodsky poem set to music. Performed mainly in Bosnian, but with much non-linguistic action, the piece communicated to a diverse international audience. The styles of play and explicit theatricality also suggested a transformational aesthetic reinforcing themes of the city's re-membering.

As relative outsiders to the city, we, as directors, tried to point toward the operations of our own power in constructing the piece, to maintain some of the show's scaffolding. We each entered the stage space at select moments to add costume pieces, manipulate props, or narrate a particular passage from inside an empty television set, further framing the fictional terrain through our introduction and construction of the archetypal characters. The ensemble developed these characters with broad physical gestures and little psychology, featuring exaggerated movements that drew attention to vocations rather than inner lives. A Map Maker and Sign Maker signified the city's conceptual space-makers. A mafioso-like Café Owner, a Banker, and Woman With Money stood for systems of capital control within the city, the People With Influence. A Hercegovine Housewife and her Street Kid daughter represented the everyday life of the city. And an Everyman Postman navigated his way through its shifting terrain.

A poem following the character introductions created a more specific context for Mostarians. The poem asked the question 'What is this city?' and defined it historically, 'built in the fifteenth century'; socially, as a 'city of poets, writers, painters, jokers, and of ordinary

people working'; geographically, 'of river and rock'; and culturally, as a city that is 'a combination of Austro-Hungarian and Turkish culture / Combination of east and west.' The poem, written by one of the cast members, promoted a historical narrative of The City/Mostar marked by social integration. The east of Turkey and west of Austro-Hungary resonated with the now divisive 'east' and 'west' sides of the city. The poem, performed in Bosnian, obliquely critiqued this division, while underlining the possibility of reunification:

[This city] today is crippled
 It is true that the city is being reconstructed,
 but bridges, buildings, and parks never made a town;
 what made it was the people living in it.

Following the introduction of characters and the city itself, the Postman established the representational space setting up character relationships through the delivery of letters. While he was instrumental in mediating this space, events soon undermined the Postman's agency. Other actors donned masks and variously represented their character/archetypes and past selves, while the Postman remained the one figure who did not undergo a physical transformation. He seemed acted upon rather than acting in the events surrounding him – similar to how the young participants had themselves experienced the war. Too young to fight in or to comprehend events, they could only bear witness to the moment when their identities violently shifted, when the war ruptured their senses of belonging. One particular shared memory served as the basis for representing this shift in *Poštara*: our effort to point toward a traumatic break without directly reproducing the experience for participants.

According to ensemble members, even during fighting in other areas of Yugoslavia, no one in Mostar believed there could be a war. One actor, Kenet, explained, 'We used to go outside and wave at the JNA [Yugoslav army] airplanes as they passed overhead. This was our army, and we were so proud of it. How could our army shoot us? We never believed it would happen until it did.' Violence transformed Kenet's metonymic identification of the planes with Yugoslavia, from 'our army' to 'our enemy'. Reference to this shift and the consequent sense of absurdity experienced by participants commenced in *Poštara* with a comic brawl. The Postman's delivery of letters not only established an initial setting and social relations in the piece but also reflected the external rise in tensions leading up to the war, particularly over

the control and production of space. The Banker and the Café Owner disagreed over the naming of the café: would it signify conceptual, capital control (the Banker, Lana's Café) or lived, proprietary control (the Owner, Bambo's Café)? Other characters aligned themselves with opposite sides of the dispute until a physical fight broke out. The Street Kid brandished her squirt gun, the Sign Maker threatened all with her menacing paintbrush, the Banker and the Woman With Money hauled chairs above their heads as the Sign Maker and Map Maker swung two wooden boards up toward each other.

At this point, the action slowed to reveal an image of the Old Bridge, constructed from pieces of the set that were themselves debris from the city. The image held for a moment until the Street Kid shot three times at its center. As the bridge collapsed, the Street Kid picked up a paper airplane, one she had constructed earlier from a letter stolen from the Postman, and floated it toward the now cheerily waving crowd. The sound of the plane transformed to a menacing drone as formerly waving hands began to shield faces. The crowd stumbled backwards, knocking over elements of the set and scattering pieces of the city, while donning featureless masks for the 'after the event' portion of the show.

The violent transformation of identity experienced by participants, signaled by the masks, arose from a representational rupture. In the terrain of memory, the JNA plane had stood in for the country, for a unified, protective state of Yugoslavia founded on Tito's platform of unity and brotherhood. In the spatial story related by participants and alluded to in *Poštár*, the jet as metonym was displaced from an association of the individual with a particular national identity ('our army') and veered instead toward an association of absence, to a voided identity.⁷ This metonymic shift from 'Yugoslav' to 'Other' signaled not only a transference of signification but also a manipulation of ideology. The newly produced conceptual space of Yugoslavia literally and figuratively displaced young Bosnians.

As an emblem for the individual loss of control experienced by ensemble members during the war, the Postman referenced this shift in identity and the violence that produced it. At the same time, the character alluded to everyday impacts on communication in the official drive to segregate and conceptually reproduce Mostar. After fighting and mapmaking in the early 1990s effectively partitioned Bosnia into three political entities, telephone and postal systems split up as well. Phone companies charged international rates for calls across Mostar's east/west border, and letters from one side of Mostar to the other were rerouted through distant cities in Serbia and Croatia. Postmen in Mostar had to navigate the city's

changing street names. It remained challenging for a theatrical representation to match this level of everyday absurdity, but we tried.

In *Poštar's* representational space, the Postman had a nightmare following the brawl, in which the People With Influence transformed into more surreal, threatening figures, opening and discarding all of his letters. The Postman awakened to find himself in a pile of undelivered mail. He tried desperately to distribute the letters, but changes within the city thwarted his efforts. Mailboxes no longer functioned, everyone had moved (or been moved), and all of the street names had changed. The Map Maker stoked the Postman's mounting frustration by handing him an updated city plan each time he passed. After finally resorting to calling names aloud, the Postman eventually stumbled across three letter recipients. They proceeded to remove the signs of their archetypal characters to read these letters as 'themselves', as other ensemble members reconfigured the stage space with bodies.

McElvany and I had worked over several years with participants to create allusory performances rather than direct testimonials, in part



Figure 2.4 Iris reads a letter from her brother in *Poštar* (Postman)

Photo: Scot McElvany.

because of the ineffectiveness of language to access the past several years. 'So much of the experience was impossible to articulate, impossible to describe', explained Meša, the actor portraying the Postman. Physical metaphor became a way for participants to express impressions rather than recreate experiences, with associative resonances beyond individual stories. In *Poštár*, for example, Iris created an image expressing both the physical location and the emotional separation she felt from her imprisoned brother. Four women wearing featureless masks stood side by side with arms raised as another actor peered through, searching for but unable to meet Iris's eyes (Figure 2.4). This image, like others generated for *Poštár*, arose from workshops focused on letters, objects of communication signifying physical absence. We asked participants to bring in their favorite line from a letter that they felt comfortable sharing with the group. Working with masks and physicality, we developed and incorporated several of these moments into the show, all of which represented the difficulty of communication across boundaries during and immediately after the war.

Letters functioned as witnesses to absence and as efforts to transcend conceptual borders – as real objects laden with symbolic attachments. But *Poštár* also worked with what theatre director Tadeusz Kantor (1993) refers to as 'REAL OBJECTS.' Kantor, a painter, writer, and director in post-World War II Poland, insists that abstraction 'disappeared in the period of mass genocide' (211). Mere representation lost its power, and artists had to work with the 'Real or POOR object,' one 'almost bereft of life,' about to be discarded, functionless, and therefore artistic (211). Kantor offers several examples of such objects: a cart wheel smeared with mud, a decayed wooden board, a scaffold splattered with plaster, a kitchen chair. Without having read Kantor before developing *Poštár*, we happened upon a selection of remarkably similar objects discovered in Mostar's streets: a rusted bicycle wheel, two decayed wooden boards, a paint-smeared stepladder, two kitchen stools, and a broken picture frame. These poor, real objects hearkened toward rich, lived space that existed outside the representational frame, but also to a past life that existed only in memory.

Thus, while Kantor's objects retained their tangible object-ness, we chose to suggest a possibility of transformation in our space of representation. The stepladder served as the Housewife's window, the Postman's bookshelf, and a giant chicken in the Postman's nightmare. The window frame changed from the Woman With Money's mirror, to a picture in the Housewife's home, to the Housewife's new doorway after 'the event.' The objects brought pieces of Mostar into the theatrical

counterspace, suggesting through their imaginative transformations various possibilities for rebuilding the city. In the final scene, the actors proposed both a material and a social reconstruction, using pieces of the set as well as verbal set pieces from the show to call for a mutually enacted rebuilding.

After establishing their sense of displacement, the nightmare that followed the war, and fragmented attempts at making meaning through a series of spatial stories told through undelivered letters, the actors removed their masks. Together they picked through assorted debris on the stage – broken boards, an old television, envelopes, a ladder on its side. They reconstructed the demolished set, and as they did so one actor stood to recall lines from the poem that had opened the show:

It is true that the city is being reconstructed,
But bridges, buildings, and parks never made a town;
What made it was the people living in it.

The poem called for this lived spatial practice to continue, to produce a new city. In performing the poem, the actors extended their address to *Poštara's* audience, crossing the representational frame to call for a practiced reconstruction of Mostar. They asked the audience to transfer their agreement, the agreement that allows for the production of fictional space, to produce a nonfictional space. Working together outside the representational terrain, this counterspace of possibility, audience, and actors might together produce a different 'real' Mostar.

Audience makeup and reaction to the show rendered this potential agreement even more possible. Though the performance and festival took place in east Mostar, several of our actors and their friends lived on the west bank. *Poštara* thus brought together individuals from both sides of the city and indeed from throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, eliciting a series of spatial practices that resisted the new order in Mostar and Bosnia. Over the summer, McElvany, Sobelle, and I had worked in the Bosnian Serb Republic as well as within the Muslim-Croat Federation, using theatre as a means to bring together youth, mainly through shared videotapes of their performances. The process had proved difficult, particularly in the more ultranationalist and closed areas of the Bosnian Serb Republic. When invited to attend our Mostar performance, Kile from Banja Luka, who had served in the Bosnian Serb army, claimed that he would require a battalion of tanks to accompany him. Danijela

from Srbinje ('place of the Serbs') had not left that city for six years and cited fear of Muslims and Croats as the reason she would not be present at our performance. Much to our surprise, both Danijela and Kile appeared at the show's opening, their attendance helping to yet again reimagine Bosnia. They joined youth from Sarajevo and other areas of Federation Bosnia, German students, international volunteers working in various organizations in Mostar, and teenagers from east Los Angeles participating in the festival.⁸

The response from audience members exemplified the impact of the piece, and its potential for re-memembering the community of Mostar and Bosnia beyond specific ethnoreligious differentiations. Days afterwards cast members reported that internationals had stopped them in the streets to repeat how moved they had been by the piece. The ensemble of actors won a special award from the Festival Judges for their 'theatrical promise and bravery'. The responses that seemed most important to participants, however, came from Mostarians and other Bosnians. At a cast feedback session following the performance, Meša Begić (who had played the Postman) located the success of the show in its ability to bring together an audience. 'We gathered a community from seven to seventy-seven.' He spoke particularly of one member, Sasha, a vocal teen and member of another youth theatre in east Mostar. 'Sasha is Mostar. He's been through so much and if he liked it, understood it, then I think we did a really good thing.' Another participant, Bambo Azderović, referred to a young woman from Sarajevo who had attended the theatre camp in Romania and come to Mostar to witness the show. 'Najda was surprised by performance. She is Sarajevo, but she has something in her soul like all of us.' In both instances, audience members were directly associated with their city of origin, and their responses, as individuals associated with particular places, affirmed (within Mostar) and expanded (to Sarajevo) the impact of the performance for the youth who co-created it.

This diversity of attendance, audience members gathered from east and west Mostar, from the Serbian Republic and Muslim-Croat Federation, as well as from further afield, at least temporarily remapped the conceptual dividing lines of the city and of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole. The audience makeup also conspired with location to further negotiate identity and meaning in Mostar. We performed on the steps of the newly rebuilt puppet theatre, itself haunted by its past as a Jewish synagogue. The hillside location overlooked the Neretva River and west Mostar: All of Mostar framed *Poštar* as the show reciprocally framed and potentially reproduced the city.

Producing 'Mostar'

Our performance was not, of course, the final word on Mostar's ongoing production. In a peculiar addendum to *Poštar*, a documentary film about our rehearsals produced yet another version of the city. The filming of our practice occurred as part of a contest for two-minute features about European countries. In this event, the most semiotically dense production of place would triumph. The Sarajevo filmmaker Benjamin Filipović required even more extreme visual density for his two minutes, as he documented eight different border-crossing youth projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina for 15 seconds each. He framed our project in Mostar with four shots, averaging less than four seconds apiece.

Filipović began by shooting our ensemble walking down the street, bearing masks and musical instruments, as Spanish tanks carrying deadly serious soldiers drove beside us. We proceeded to our outdoor rehearsal space, a shelled statue conveniently located next to Mostar's frontline street (Figure 2.5). Filipović then cut to a shot of ensemble members Meša and Hajdi crossing this border from east to west Mostar in order to join our rehearsal. The next shot featured a



Figure 2.5 *Poštar* rehearsal with choreographed tanks in the background

Photo: Sonja Arsham Kuftinec.

performer drumming as two tanks pulled away behind him. In the fourth shot Meša and Hajdi crossed a rebuilt chain bridge, temporarily filling the space of the Stari Most, just as a young Mostarian skillfully jumped from its tremendous height into the chilly waters of the Neretva below – a competitive sport in Mostar.

We conspired with Filipović to fake almost every element of this documentary. To ‘establish that we were a theatre group’ we grabbed whatever instruments and props we found in our indoor rehearsal space. We never worked outdoors in the west, as this could have endangered our mixed group of participants, but ensemble members had agreed to a one-day suspension of this rule. The tanks, conveniently passing by as we strode to our conveniently fragmented space, had actually been precisely directed. The soldiers, who normally lounged lazily atop the tank, smoking and chatting with passersby, now performed a sterner, more ‘soldierly’ stance, rifles raised to attention. When we reached our fake site, the tank driver radioed his colleagues so that two other armored personal carriers would pass through the next shot. Though Meša lived in east Mostar, and indeed had to cross the frontline street to reach rehearsal, Hajdi lived on the west and did not. Finally, Filipović paid the young man to jump from the temporary Old Bridge at the precise moment that Meša and Hajdi began to cross to Hajdi’s nonexistent home. Despite the illusions and fakery, the resultant documentary, replete with gutted buildings, armored tanks, fragments of the old bridge, and theatrical border crossings, conveyed ‘Mostar’ more strongly than any 15-second framing of real time in the city would.

But what is this city?

Filipović had neither the time nor the capacity to wait for Mostar to emerge, so he forged an image of Mostar predetermined in his imagination, reproducing a space that had already been mediated by mapmakers and image makers. The pedestrians and performers in this movie had no choice in the path laid out, the audience no input into Mostar’s future. The filmic image froze the city through an illusion of movement.

Poštar was not innocent of image manipulation. Like the conceptual production of space, theatre achieves its power by declaring one thing another, by changing signs and names. Mostar becomes ‘the City’. The space in front of the puppet theatre becomes a living room, a café, a nightmare, a jail, a memory. This infiltration of space does not guarantee resistance; indeed, the theatre often operates strategically as a national institution fashioning and reinforcing a particular identity and heritage, an operation that requires visibility, stability, and often

a theatre building. One of the first edifices to be constructed in west Mostar was a national theatre. In a village near Mostar, amateur performers revived a historical play hearkening to and forging ties to a particular Muslim past. In its 'proper' place, theatre maintains national sentiment. Outside this propriety, performance can invert official culture in a more tactical manner; theatre can become a practiced space of accusation and resistance, producing not only a 'utopic imaginary' but also an alternative set of stories that reanimate civic discourse.

Participatory theatre with Mostarian youth did create some signification transformations, serving as a site for reintegration, for recognizing, playing with, and crossing various borders of social identity. Yet this coming together could not completely alter the political threat under which Bosnians then lived. At a Mladi Most party following the production of *Poštár* a nationalist Croat pulled a gun in the street, threatening youth entering the party. In the Serbian Republic of Bosnia youth participants feared leaving the country with a Bosnian rather than Serbian passport. A map published by west Mostar officials in 1997 did not mark any of east Mostar, even erasing municipal buildings supposedly common to the city. Playing with the borders, dramaturgically, ethnically, or geographically is never permanent, nor completely satisfying. This kind of play does, however, reveal the possibility for transgression, for remapping, for revelation and cohesion. As performer Meša Begić might say 'I guess that's theatre.'

What worked

Collaboratively created social theatre in and around Mostar served variously as a site of alleviation, testimony, action, accusation and entertainment. In Varaždin, theatre restored a relationship with the past and provided new ways of envisioning the future. *Podrum* offered new ways of conceiving past traumas, regenerating a Mostarian community through collective testimony and radically passive witness. *Poštár* animated a resistant counter-memory, making transparent through theatrical allegory how the city had been divided and could be productively remembered. In each case, the aesthetic space operated as a site to explore and cross a variety of borders, to deconstruct and reconstruct social identity, and embody new narratives of community. The process worked dialogically within the group and with audiences that ranged from camp residents, to German youth, to those from within and outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with performances in Mostar moving further into the public sphere of civic discourse. Performances also moved from more private and personal testimony towards public expression and theatrical metaphor;

towards more direct political actions that modeled participatory democracy, reclaiming and reanimating public space. The youth embodied the notion that a democratic civil society does not simply sustain the illusion of sovereignty through the carving out of ethnoreligious territories, but requires active civilian struggle to articulate a better future world. As Neera Chandhoke proposes in 'The Limits of Global Civil Society', civil society is not about organized governance but participatory politics, the creation of 'visions and aspirations' not only the 'neutralization of tensions' (2002: 45). In anonymous and public post-show evaluations, follow-up interviews, and personal emails, participants attested to the power of the experience for them as civic agents, as a place to encounter themselves and others, to resituate themselves in a post-war landscape that they felt some capacity to envision and to shape.

But I wonder whether producing these selective effusive testimonials would replicate the historiographic spin jobs perpetuated in Mostar and Bosnia-Herzegovina, pasting over the traumatic ruptures and differences within the theatre-making experience, particularly those wrought by the facilitation itself, as well as by political realities that could not be immediately transformed. So I'd like to return to some of the sites reconstructed above and tell different stories, to relate some of the misunderstandings that illuminate the blind spots and limitations of theatrical facilitation. In Varaždin and the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a few instances in particular draw attention to the difficulties of negotiating the position of the facilitator, who cannot always contain past traumas or recognize present dangers.

ARCHIVES OF FAILURE

Dis-integration in Varaždin

In a letter to my family following the production of *Odakle Ste* I wrote that the experience was extraordinary, in part because of its difficulty. 'In the middle of the second week at the camp, physically ill from food and worry, I just wanted it all to end and become the experience of memory that it is now.' The note recalls the difficulties of negotiating differences that are generally suppressed in the post-performance narrative in the service of relating a coherent and often hopeful tale, and the desire to be on the other side of experience in order to craft that tale. But the experience in Varaždin included a number of challenges that set the limits of theatre's ability to contain and even to identify 'misbehavior'.

While Sabrina Peck and I had learned to negotiate rehearsals around the daily life of the camp we had remained largely ignorant of how we reinforced divisions between participants, particularly those most impacted by the trauma of the war. We had been having problems with a few teenage boys during rehearsals and had repeatedly asked them to leave because they were disruptive of our activities. They played cards during rehearsals, and generally disrespected our authority in what we had come to see as 'our' space – the privileged volunteer living areas of the camp where we rehearsed. As conflict between us escalated, the boys broke our windows and harassed other workshop participants. The evening of our dress rehearsal, the boys positioned themselves outside an open window and shouted commentary through the final run-through. Frustrated, we wondered how they might be prevented from disturbing the next evening's performance. We couldn't see why the boys exhibited such disrespect of the theatrical process. And of us.

In ensuing negotiations our Suncokret coordinator, Darko, and other camp residents helped reverse our perspective enabling us to witness to our own judgments and misunderstandings, our own misbehaviors. Darko reminded us of his primary responsibility for integrating the boys, suffering from post-traumatic stress, into the camp community. The boys had felt excluded by the performance process, believing that we wanted to work with the more 'popular' teenage girls, and not with them. Perceptions shifted and we saw that what was required was, in Thompson and Schechner's terms, a disciplinary accommodation between theatre and social work.

We had offered theatre as a complement to more dialogue-based psychosocial work, but came to see that theatre needed to accommodate itself as well. Reintegration was at the core of Suncokret's psychological work, and the theatrical process was only meaningful within this context insofar as it worked with this goal. Integration – of past experience with present circumstances, of camp and town residents, of displaced Croatians and Bosnian refugees – had occurred at many points in the process. But the 'disruptive' boys had remained outside of our understanding, becoming another kind of outgroup against which the less-traumatized residents defined themselves, just as the camp and town residents had initially played out new ingroup/outgroup formations in relation to each other. The theatrical process in and of itself did not operate outside of the dynamics of minimal group theory. We had, in fact, created another ingroup through the process. Recognizing these dynamics shifted our relationship with the boys, we apologized and asked if they would like to participate as audience members, working to

expand this temporary ingroup to include them in the final performance. While not fully integrated, they became attentive witnesses to the experience, as we became witnesses to the limitations of our process. In dialogue with the camp residents and with Suncokret, we learned to rethink the core of the work, and the ways that it could generate as well as reveal and rewrite ingroup/outgroup relationships.

The stakes of this recognition increased while working in the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in one of its most nationalist regions, Foča, renamed during the war as Srbinje (land of the Serbs). In conflict with another nongovernmental organization as well as with some of the local population, we assessed our politics of theatrical integration and the limits of their accommodation to local leaders.

Accommodations in Srbinje

In addition to work with youth in Mostar, Scot McElvany and I had conceived of a series of workshops in the two regions of Bosnia-Herzegovina divided along ethnopolitical lines: the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Serbian Republic of Bosnia. Recognizing the constraints of mobility at the time, we planned to work in a few small towns, introducing one or two youth from different areas to each other through the projects. Our efforts to bring a Muslim translator into the Serbian Republic proved more complicated than we had anticipated.

We knew that ultra nationalist Srbinje presented a more challenging terrain for intergroup interaction, yet we had worked all summer to develop this workshop through our colleague Shin Yasui, who ran a youth center in the town. In order to promote exchange between the Bosnian Serb youth in Srbinje and Muslim and Croatian youth from Mostar, we had invited Meša Begić (the Postman in *Poštár*) to work with us. Encounters with an older resident of the town and with another nongovernmental organization (NGO) forced us to reassess Meša's presence in Srbinje. Soon after our arrival, we realized that acting on our ideals of integration, while conceived with and agreed upon by Meša, placed him in danger.

After crossing into Srbinje, we met with Shin and congregated in a local restaurant for lunch. Towards the end of our meal, a somewhat inebriated man approached, gesticulating wildly and speaking in an accusatory, mainly incomprehensible tongue. The tenor of his speech made all of us uneasy, though no one more than Meša who understood the substance of the speech as well. Yet, Meša was unable to translate this content for us in the public space of the restaurant. He knew, as we

had not considered, that his very voice, his Mostarian accent, would reveal his origins as non-Serbian. And Meša's Muslim-ness, though not essential to his own sense of identity, was a marker that might lead to violence in the Serbian Republic. We later found this to be the substance of the man's speech. He threatened to beat us as he had beaten his young daughter for teaching her to sing Italian songs. He also raved about the 'Turks' who had killed his brothers in the hills and the demonization of the Serbs propagated by the United States.

In a region in which divided ethnoreligious groups speak the same language, share cultural histories, and geographic space, accent and action defined the newly essential borders of 'Serb', 'Croat', and 'Muslim' in Bosnia.⁹ By referring to Muslims as 'Turks' the man in the restaurant physically displaced and differentiated all Muslim-affiliated Bosnians. In the same breath, he located Serbian-ness in a language of difference – 'non-Serbian' Italian songs. The 1995 signing of treaties in Dayton, Ohio, legally allowed residents of Bosnia-Herzegovina to move freely across newly established borders between the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Serb Republic. Yet, any Muslim knew that to cross the mountainous terrain into Srbinje, a district containing the largest concentration of unindicted war criminals in Bosnia, entailed anxiety, if not life-threatening danger. These thoughts had assuredly crossed Meša's mind, as the alcoholic breath of the self-described Serb gunman swept across our restaurant table. Meša's presence in Srbinje broke no laws, yet as someone who could be defined as Muslim, he had transgressed. Still, the man's specific accusation confused us; we had taught no Italian songs to anyone. None of us even knew Italian.

Eventually we realized that the gentleman had us confused with another group working with youth in Srbinje, the Blessed Peacemakers. In contrast with our methods of bringing together youth through theatre, this group purported to follow the rules of the town initiating separate projects with Serbs and Muslims in the region. Prior to our arrival with Meša, the Peacemakers had agreed to share with us the schoolhouse space that town authorities had offered for their project. Once they discovered Meša's Muslim identification, however, they reneged. In a face-to-face confrontation in which we asked the group for a rationale, their spokeswoman looked away from Meša, who was present in the conversation, and said 'There is one among you from Mostar East [the Muslim side of the divided city of Mostar]. Bringing someone to Srbinje from Mostar East is tantamount to infiltrating a spy in the region.' To preserve their project and relationship with town authorities, the Peacemakers placed local rule above the international

treaty that designated Meša's presence as legal. Yet, we (including Meša) had placed this rule and our own convictions about border crossing above Meša's individual safety and security. Their insistence on accommodation and our stubbornness in not doing so (alongside the drunken Serb's threats) eventually led Meša back to the relatively safer haven of Mostar. We found another way to develop a performance piece in Shin's youth house, while contemplating the ethics of our theatre praxis.

Reflections on ethics and effectiveness define much of the discourse of community-based theatre. Some practitioners insist that only those living within a specific region should attempt to work with local residents. Others suggest that outsiders can more effectively mediate the theatrical process. Most insist on the direct involvement of participants in some artistic decision-making and the engagement of local leaders in the process to ensure its sanction. Yet, the local leaders in Srbinje defied the Dayton Peace Accords, resisted our colleague Shin's efforts to build a youth center, and tried on numerous occasions to force international workers out of the town. So we chose to work directly with Shin, who was seen by the youth in the center as a local leader, while the Peacemakers deferred to municipal authorities; thus their anxiety about the presence of 'a Muslim' in Srbinje.

As facilitators, we had our own anxieties about Meša's presence. In order to 'protect' him, we had asked Meša to change his name (short for Mohammed) to Miki while in Srbinje. Meša does not practice Islam; he sees himself primarily as a partisan and poet. But since 1992, when an armed Bosnian Serb militia group had informed his family at gunpoint that they had five minutes to leave their home in Hercegovina, he had come to understand that his identity could not only be defined by himself. Now, threatened by the alcoholic nationalist, demeaned by the Peacemakers, made uncomfortable by our conspiracy to conceal his identity, Meša decided to return to Mostar, to his name, and his new home. Before doing so he privately expressed to McElvany and myself his opinion about the Blessed Peacemakers. 'People like that keep my country divided.'

I felt gratified by his comment at the time. Now I wonder whether the blame was misplaced. In service of the worthy goal of working with Bosnian Serb youth who had been neglected by most NGOs, the Peacemakers indeed indirectly supported segregation. But divisions in Bosnia-Hercegovina were primarily dictated by civic authorities, stoked by selective memories, and sustained by the threat of violence against difference. In this context, the Peacemakers chose tactical accommodation. I realize that in retelling this story I tended to render it through a

melodramatic formation – casting myself and Scot as vigilant(e) heroes and the Blessed Peacemakers as subservient villains. In fact we both had similar goals (working with youth) and process (working through local leaders). Our conflict had as much to do with competition for resources (the schoolroom) and shoring up our own positive self-image as it did with the actual planned work with Srbinje youth; an instructive reflection in light of the divisive Bosnian context.

The conflict with the Peacemakers did have the benefit of illuminating for those youth the limitations that they lived with. Danijela had earlier in the summer refused to join a theatre camp we were running for a wide spectrum of Balkan youth expressing fears of interacting with Muslims and Croats. Having now spoken with Meša face-to-face (as the Italian spokeswoman had refused to), Danijela began to transgress her fears. Later in the summer she became part of the *Poštara* audience. At this earlier point in time, she expressed dismay over the limitations she had begun to perceive in Srbinje. ‘There are no independent news sources. We only receive official propaganda. People here live in fear of their own government.’ She then expressed chagrin at Meša’s departure, urging his return at some point.

The performance we eventually generated in Srbinje focused on fighting against perceived constraints in the town. Political regulations and the local atmosphere dictated a small audience gathered in relative secrecy viewing somewhat ambiguous scenes about those limitations: nightmares set to rap music and an allegorical scenario in which performers fought against becoming part of a divisive fence. And our audience included several of the Blessed Peacemakers as well as two Muslim youth from Mostar who had chosen to travel to the performance with our colleagues from Mladi Most.

Success in overcoming municipal regulations in Bosnia-Herzegovina included the bringing together of Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian youth in Srbinje and later in Mostar. This success contrasted with the eventual failure of our colleague Shin’s youth center in Srbinje, and his later evacuation from the region. This success also occurred in some ways at Meša’s expense. Our ethic of integration had contributed to his endangerment. His departure and the threats he faced in Srbinje forced us to question some of the guidelines governing our participatory praxis.

Archiving failures

Archiving these two failures highlights some historiographic challenges in how collective memory is documented. In Varaždin, Sabrina Peck and I faced questions about who would frame the youths’ experience, and

how we might accommodate ourselves to the context of the camp and the psychosocial orientation of our sponsors. In Srbinje, the challenge focused on historiographic ethics that asked whether we could perform reparative and future-oriented memory within unjust constraints or alongside other groups who navigate those constraints differently. In both cases, these differences refuse to be pasted over.

In the introduction to this book I noted Benson and O'Neill's ethnographic caveats, their insistence on the need to be alive to moments in which one's knowledge, design, and control are challenged. Attesting to those moments underlines the recognition of responsibility to others *and* the impossibility of ever exhausting that responsibility. As Scot McElvany and I continued to work together with Meša and other youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Balkan region as a whole, we bore this in mind. We sought ways of constructing projects that would not only expand on collaborative design, but also move initiatives further from our direct control. The youth magazine edited by SHL – *Nepitani* – meaning 'those who are not asked' inspired us. We were informed by critiques of non-governmental organizations that tried to 'force' Bosnians back together and by the questioning of an 'imposed reconciliation'.

The Between-the-Lines project, in which I was partially involved and which I discuss in the next chapter, asked Balkan youth to articulate themselves in multiple ways as well as to design and develop their own projects. Over two years, the project initiated theatrically informed conversations among various groups of Balkan youth including those in Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Between-the-Lines culminated with both a project design workshop and a performance installation and tour in Germany. The youth involved had determined not only to 'come together' but also to contest how they were positioned in relation to Europe, to play with the definitions of Balkan-ness outside of its geographical terrain. Between-the-Lines worked within and outside of the South East European region culminating in a performance installation in another formerly divided city, Berlin.

3

Between the Lines: Staging ‘the Balkans’ through Berlin (2001)

It was us, the Eastern Europeans, who invented ‘Europe’, constructed it, dreamed about it, called upon it. This Europe is a myth created by us... unfortunate outsiders, poor relatives, infantile nations of our continent. Europe was built by those of us living on the edges.

—Slavenka Drakulić (1999: 212)

I think the first thing I need to do when I get back home is go for a longer walk.

—Macedonian participant at Between-the-Lines seminar

Before engaging Between-the-Lines, a series of theatrically facilitated seminars and a subsequent performance installation with Balkan youth, I invite you to walk with me on a journey.¹ This chapter serves as a segue from Mostar to Jerusalem, via a slight detour through another city. Or cities.

It is October 2007 and I am strolling through New York in the middle of Berlin. It’s actually a conceptual ‘New York’ in a cultural center, part of an exhibition populated by such objects as an oversized green Nike sneaker with a video screen embedded in its heel. On the screen, residents of Jamaica, Queens speak passionately about their neighborhood.² I find myself first caught up by the defamiliarized shoe and then listening intently to the residents assess the politics of their location in the urban terrain. The oddness of hearing this analysis from Afro-Caribbean-New Yorkers in Berlin, on a sneaker, productively disorients me. It’s a compelling example of how artists can animate civic conversations and draw witnesses to them through creative recontextualizations. It reminds me of my own earlier work on *Between the Lines* with Balkan youth and various artists, including Scot and Nele

Julius-McElvany. Especially as that performance project had culminated in the same location currently displaying the sneaker, Berlin's House of World Cultures (*Haus der Kulturen der Welt* or HKW).³

The McElvany's conceived of *Between-the-Lines* in 2000 as a way to think through their relationships with Berlin, where they now lived, and Mostar, where they had met through the German youth organization Schüler Helfen Leben (SHL). They established the nonprofit Community Arts Berlin and designed *Between-the-Lines* to continue investigating intersections between theatre and nation formation in the Balkans. With later support from the European Union, SHL eventually funded the year-long project, which included five ten-day seminars run by Community Arts Berlin. The seminars used theatre as one tool to explore social identity, inspire participant-initiated civic projects, and sustain youth networks. The follow-up installation at the HKW would synthesize and theatrically stage findings about 'Balkan culture'. Though not discussed in the *Between-the-Line* project's design, Berlin's recentering in Europe impacted the staging of 'the Balkans' in the city. Through location, audience address, and content, *Between-the-Lines* indexes a number of the political spatialities that constitute Berlin, Europe, and what grant language referred to as 'South East Europe' – territory largely excluded from the newly formed European Union.⁴

This chapter moves away from the contested regions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Israel/Palestine to examine how a location within Europe can reframe questions about nation formation and citizenship. Can or should a 'supranational' European citizenship, based on human rights rather than attachment to nation-states, transcend a recent history of genocide and Cold War divisions?⁵ In what ways do 'the Balkans' function as a peripheral frontier that establishes the limits of European civilization and citizenship, grounded in terms of peace, security, and a free market economy? How might theatrical practices with youth, aged 16–25, address and restage these questions? As a center initially designed to present 'non-European cultures', how does the HKW and its evolving mission intersect with these stagings? In this chapter's journey I guide the reader through three *Between-the-Lines* projects initiated from Berlin to explore how ethnic, national, and supranational identity might be forged in a 'new Europe', one that political philosopher Etienne Balibar (2002) and theatre scholar Janelle Reinelt both locate as a site of geopolitical struggle that could call for a more inclusive and responsible 'super-democracy' (Reinelt, 2001: 365).⁶

The possibility for a more active, inclusive European citizenry seemed particularly important when I began working on *Between the Lines* in

Berlin. The installation unfolded shortly after September 11th, a moment that Germans might call *die Wende*, a polarizing global 'turning point' that produced further anxiety about Islamic presence in the Balkans. The project also occurred within a city that had recently experienced its own turning points, including German reunification in 1990 and the resultant construction of a 'New Berlin' upon a palimpsest of contested historical memories.⁷ Geographer Karen Till proposes that after 1990 the city marked and marketed itself, in part, as the 'cosmopolitan center' of Europe – a 'Europe' constituted in 1993 as a political and economic Union (at least among its 27 Member States).⁸

As Till points out, the 'cosmopolitanism' referenced by architects of the 'New Berlin' alludes to a transnational consumer elite class rather than to the economic migrants populating the city, or to classical and enlightenment figuring of the cosmopolitan as a 'citizen of the world'. Bruce Robbins and Pheng Cheah suggest that contemporary notions of the 'cosmopolitan' have, in fact, been inflected by economic and political migrations (1998). Marked by those migrations (and the anxieties they produced), the European Union has become the de facto laboratory for exploring what a 'cosmopolitan' or 'supranational' citizenship could or should be. In self-definition and practice that citizenship oscillates between rights-based sociality, participatory democracy, free market neoliberalism, and attachment to 'supranational' myth-symbol complexes replicating the tropes of nation formation.⁹ As a self-defined 'center' of a geographic Europe inclusive of the Balkans, and of a European Union excluding most of the Balkans (and anxious about their inclusion), Berlin offers a rich site to explore vectors of citizenship and social identity through the Between-the-Lines projects.

I follow these theatrical facilitations as they move from the streets of Mostar to Berlin's House of World Cultures, and from 'social theatre' focused on healing, testimony, and community-building, towards theatrical practices more directly concerned with querying attachments to the nation and producing models of citizenship that extend beyond state regulations. Throughout the Balkans, and in an institution founded to stage 'non-European culture', participating youth deployed performance to examine what it meant to be (South East) European.

The seminars and installation worked in different ways to explore and reimagine how the EU, Germany, residents of Berlin, and the youth themselves figured 'the Balkans'. Seminars (conducted in English) used theatre as a tool to investigate the construction of national belonging as both participatory citizenship and cultural performance. *Between the Lines* built on seminar investigations with an ensemble of youth from

all five seminars. Both projects partnered with Balkan youth organizations, but where German organizations (Community Arts Berlin and SHL) primarily framed seminars, participating youth and a Yugoslav theatre director co-created the performance installation. This follow-up project engaged environmental performance and installation as technologies to deconstruct assumptions of ethnicity, nation, and citizenship for an international audience in Berlin.

The youth in both projects not only explored social identity but also came to recognize with each other (in seminars) and to stage for a broader audience (in performance) how the state regulates that identity. Ultimately, *Between-the-Lines* proposed how participants, and later audiences, might move towards more fluid, historically sensitive, and politically workable constructions of participatory citizenship through relational performances.

Before guiding the reader through the installation project in Berlin, I introduce *Between-the-Lines* via two seminars in the Balkans that I experienced only indirectly. The first, in the coastal fishing town of Rovinj, modeled efficacious encounters with youth from Croatia. The latter, more challenging seminar, took place in Bulgaria with youth from Macedonia, shortly after ethnic Albanian riots wracked the region and led to a closer examination of what it meant to be 'Macedonian'. Through project narratives, interviews, digital archives, and analysis of self-reported attitudinal shifts, I assess how Community Arts Berlin used Boal-based theatre to explore ethnic and national attachments, as well as to develop a sense of civic agency among participating youth. These explorations and activations paved the road, marked the obstacles, and led to more nuanced performances in *Between the Lines* Berlin.

Between *ethnos* and *demos* in Southeast Europe

Rovinj, Croatia

In a video documenting the first *Between-the-Lines* seminar, conducted with 15 youth over ten days in February 2001, a participant approaches facilitator Scot McElvany with a question about an image theatre exercise. The youth wonders whether to place himself into the dynamic sculpture that he is creating. Receiving a response suggesting that he make the choice himself, the young man flies back towards his group, leaps onto a rehearsal platform, and throws his arms around the young women awaiting him. 'I have never worked like this', he later shares in a filmed interview. 'Normally on seminars we are sitting around talking, but this stuff is like, wow, it gets you involved and gives you energy.'¹⁰

Other participants express equivalent enthusiasm in their responses, particularly noting the ways that theatre contributed to their individual activation as well as to the development of close relationships in the group. 'When I came to Rovinj I was really very empty', a young woman admits. 'I needed meeting new people, and I got so many things here...I had the best ten days in my life.' 'We formed a utopia', another young woman enthusiastically exclaims before more hesitantly adding, 'I hope that the project in Vukovar [an Eastern Croatian city near Serbia] will be realized.'

The comments archived here, and echoed in anonymous attitudinal surveys conducted after the seminar, are telling in a number of ways. I am particularly struck by the relationship between a 'utopian' community and a proposed project with ethnic Serbian minorities in Vukovar. This relationship between felt community and activated civic engagement evokes two classical notions of 'the people' in the emergence of the nation-state: as imagined community (*ethnos*) and politically activated subjects (*demos*). While the McElvanys and Sarah Riese of Community Arts Berlin did not specifically deploy this classical terminology, goals focused on building relations and analyzing national attachments, as well as on animating civic responsibility – supporting the youth to make choices that would place them in images of future possibilities. The Between-the-Lines brochure, designed by Community Arts Berlin, articulates these goals in more youth-friendly language: 'Meet people' and 'Take active part in your society by realizing your own project!' In both funding proposals and brochure, the project's language conjures a sense of citizenship that is tied not only to place and collective identity (*ethnos*), but also to a sense of activated responsibility (*demos*).¹¹ Between-the-Lines additionally proposed to forge relationships across borders of ethnic identity.

The aspirational project in Vukovar spoke to all of these goals while pointing towards the complicated relationship between *ethnos* and *demos* in the contemporary nation-state. Designed to bring together ethnic Serb and Croatian youth, the Vukovar project foregrounded the internal dynamics of national attachments, how 'the people' as political subjects negotiate ethnic difference and majority/minority relationships. The journey towards developing this imagined project also modeled some ways that this relational negotiation might happen. Thus the Rovinj seminar as a whole operated as both exception and prototype within the Between-the-Lines program.

Through introductory games, mapping exercises, and image theatre work that catalyzed discussions of culture and nation, the youth in

Rovinj reflected on national belongings while generating new group relationships with each other. The resultant forging of a temporary ethical community allowed the youth to discuss problems in their home regions, and to together envision some creative solutions. I will sketch out how the seminar worked before proposing some limitations on its efficacious potential, limitations that grew more significant in the Macedonia seminar.

The Rovinj seminar proceeded through three phases, each of which used theatre in distinct ways to generate and reflect on collective attachments and individual responsibilities. In the first phase, Scot McElvany introduced Boal-based games to demechanize the physical body and habits of thought, while also producing a mode of embodied and affective interaction 'exercising and liberating the body and mind' (Croatia Report: 11).¹² This preliminary phase also laid the ground for more in-depth encounters. In the seminar's second phase, participants generated autobiographical narratives on index cards, mapped out their hometowns in drawings, and reflected their insights in image theatre. This phase also introduced some of the ways that youth in Croatia embodied ethnic differentiation in daily life. In discussing his home map, a young man from Vukovar described walking down the street and witnessing Croatian kids casually moving to the other side of the street when they saw ethnic Serbians coming the other way. He noted that there was no overt hostility, simply an action engaged in to 'avoid trouble' (13), thus sustaining separations in the city.

The participants then used this autobiographical work to generate reflective embodied images. McElvany relates how one participant created an image that described her 'regaining control and determination' when she left London, where she had been living in political asylum, to return to Croatia after the war (13). She placed four people in a row, each expressing a stage of her emotional state. The last character showing 'confidence' couldn't be seen by the audience, but when asked if she would like to change something about the image, she declined. Another participant then asked if he could make a change and repositioned the image so that the character of 'confidence' could be better seen. The image's creator noted that witnessing the change helped her to more accurately understand her experience as a refugee returning to her Croatian 'home'.

While offering reflective aesthetic spaces for the youth, the image work also rehearsed the process of witnessing to each other's narratives, a process that laid the foundation for the seminar's third phase exploring culture and nation. In this phase, participants generated short

performance pieces about their culture, catalyzing lengthy discussions about contemporary Croatia including the 'false nature' of Croatian nationalism and Catholicism, the lack of creativity in schools, and the absence of 'vital youth spaces' (14). Yet, participants remained hesitant about engaging more difficult issues around Serbian minority rights. They seemed capable of critiquing Croatian culture without the balanced capacity to critique Croatian politics, particularly around issues that involved their own privileges and responsibilities.

Then one evening, after a particularly difficult discussion about internal cultural difference, one of two ethnic Serbian youth in the seminar made a request. He alluded to divisions in Vukovar that he had previously referenced in his hometown map, and asked the group for help in generating a project that would bring the two sides of the street together. Faced with the option of embarking on a constructive task, the group began using their limited free time to sketch out the details of such a project until they eventually 'took over' and led several working sessions in the seminar itself. They used the time to develop plans for youth workshops, brainstorm about gathering participants, and to test out activities. Community Arts Berlin had conceived of *Between-the-Lines* as a way to generate youth-initiated projects, but they had their own timetable in mind for project development – a separate seminar in Sarajevo that would bring together selected participants from the five preliminary sessions. To their initial dismay and eventual delight, the Rovinj youth productively self-organized around the Vukovar project, redirecting several sessions of the planned seminar.

Development of the Vukovar project pointed towards a successful group negotiation of ethnic minority difference while actualizing the group's power over the facilitated structure. But participants were able to achieve this success, in part, by avoiding a deeper discussion of majority power and accountability within Croatia. In a 2007 interview, Nele Julius-McElvany – who had facilitated discussions around nationalism – noted to me that at least one participant whose father had been in the army privately acknowledged Croatian responsibility for war crimes, but was unable to speak of this to the larger group. Still, the violence that had broken out in Vukovar during the 1990s war seemed distant enough to warrant repair if not closer examination by the group.

Theatrical facilitations in Rovinj accomplished a great deal. As one participant noted, the seminar created a space to think 'about the world, about yourself, about society, about your country... to meet people and talk about the issues that matter and tend to get lost in normal [everyday] life'

(11). In addition to generating this collective reflective space, the seminar moved participants from passive, 'empty' and alienated individuals, to an activated, caring group, rehearsing a kind of democracy that in Jacques Rancière's words 'wrests the monopoly of public life from oligarchic governments' (2007: 74). But the capacity to do so also rested in having some distance from a more violent, divisive past. Encounter could thus focus on contact without in-depth assessment of power relations, and on social identity as a constructive rather than comparative or competitive force. A later seminar with youth living in Macedonia rendered more transparent the forces that made it difficult for participants to negotiate majority/minority differences between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians. The capacity of this later group to generate collective projects and actions came up against a regression to nationalist stereotypes (which had not emerged in Croatia), illuminating the challenge of bringing together *demos* and *ethnos* in a country experiencing violent conflict.

Velinograd, Bulgaria

Ethnic conflict framed the Macedonia seminar before it had even begun. An outbreak of riots in Tetovo, a predominantly Albanian city in the newly recognized and awkwardly named Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) had led to the seminar's last-minute move to Velinograd in nearby Bulgaria. For ten days in April 2001, two ethnic Albanians joined 16 other ethnic Macedonian youth living in the country, much to the expressed relief of Community Arts Berlin who at first hoped for more Albanian participants, but later noted that 'half Albanians could have created even more tension' (Between-the-Lines Newsletter, 2001: 1). The presence of even two ethnic Albanians surfaced tensions between the seminar's goals of establishing personal relations and investigating nation and culture.

According to Community Arts reports and interviews, Scot McElvany began the seminar along a similar trajectory as in Croatia, with theatrical games used to create an introductory frame, forge interpersonal relationships, and liberate habituated thoughts and expectations. Theatrical activities also overturned expectations of youth seminars as disembodied and lecture-based. A young man from Skopje discussed the effectiveness of immediate physical contact in an interview cited in the Macedonia seminar report. 'I have never done anything like this and so wasn't really sure what was expected of me. All these [theatre games] prepare you and make you feel good with the other people and ready to just say things on your mind and open up a little more' (Macedonia

Report: 11).¹³ Shortly thereafter, an embodied cultural mapping exercise revealed fault lines in the 'feel good'.

Participants located themselves physically on an imagined graph in response to questions such as: 'How Macedonian/Albanian/German do you feel?' and 'To what degree does your culture influence your identity?' and 'How important is it to maintain your traditions?' The embodiment of responses, expressed through varying levels of physical positioning, height, and raised hands, visibly mapped the group's public attitudes towards nation and culture. And the questions produced some seemingly contradictory answers. Many participants indicated that they felt only somewhat attached to an ethnic identity, but almost everyone expressed the importance of maintaining 'their' cultural traditions (12). This contradiction hints at tensions inherent in the relationship between nation and state, *ethnos* and *demos*, particularly for a newly recognized country whose official name still connected it to a former Yugoslavia. Whether or not they felt attached to a nation – an often fictive construct produced through shared past, myths, and invented traditions – participants recognized the importance of establishing a *sense* of shared tradition.

In this and later exercises, the seminar quickly raised the emotional question of what it meant to be Macedonian, a question complicated by regional disputes within and outside of the country. Both Bulgaria and Greece claim regions also known as Macedonia, a reason for the formal FYROM moniker. Additionally, minority citizens within the new nation-state expressed attachments to an Albanian nation, as the Seeds of Peace youth did in their 2004 image theatre presentations in Ohrid (discussed in Chapter 1). Tensions between popular sovereignty and civic democracy alluded to in the physical graph exercise, also intersected with the state's desire for EU membership. To be accepted as a Member State within the EU under the Copenhagen Criteria, as Macedonia hopes to be, a candidate has to be perceived by other Members States as 'democratic' and 'human rights-based' with 'demonstrated respect for and protection of minority cultures' (Enlargement and Neighborhood policy). Operating as a state, the EU regulates ethics through codifying principles and practices. The seminars unearthed the complexity of negotiating these principles at the popular level in the midst of violent conflict. Thus, the 'demonstrated respect' that the EU calls for proved hard to come by; anxieties felt by the majority ingroup predictably materialized in their regression to outgroup stereotypes within the seminar.¹⁴

While the seminar program had been structured to move progressively through personal expression towards national reflection, the Macedonian participants' anxiety could not be fully contained by that structure. In between early activity sessions, facilitators overheard heated comments voiced by the ethnic Macedonians about Albanians as a group: 'In ten years they will be the majority because ALL Albanian families have at least ten children'; 'We live in Macedonia, we should speak Macedonian. A second language is the first step towards real division and separation'; and 'What more do they want! They have more rights than any minority in any other country!' The comments indicate anxiety about the Other signaled through regression to stereotypes (all Albanians have large families), a belief that the dominant culture and language should be 'the norm' (rationalized through an expressed desire for unity), and a parallel sense of superiority, alluded to in the notion that the majority *grants* rights to the minority. In their comments, the Macedonians oscillate between separating themselves from Albanians and justifying cultural domination through rhetoric that is against division; they mask a desire for control through the language of 'tolerance'.¹⁵

Yet, the same participants expressed concerns about undoing friendships established with the *particular* Albanians in the seminar – who they quite liked and considered 'exceptional' – a reaction typical of subtyping within encounter groups (Weber and Crocker, 1983). But eventually, the more structured theatrical activities produced reflective spaces where contradictory feelings towards the 'typical' and the particular could be more fully and publicly discussed as a group.

In the home-mapping activity, an ethnic Macedonian woman from Tetovo paused in the midst of her presentation to admit, 'You know I feel a little ashamed right now. When I was drawing my map I realized that I don't know what the Albanian parts of Tetovo look like or what's there. I think the first thing I need to do when I get back home is go for a longer walk' (13). Our social spaces tend to be confined to who or what we know and where we feel secure. As Zygmunt Bauman points out, however, that security often relies upon mobility for the dominant ingroup and containment of enemy or minority outgroups (1993: 158).¹⁶ Yet, the dominant culture is often unaware of the gaps in their knowledge about minorities and how they reinforce structures of control. Intergroup encounters that generate aesthetic spaces for production and reflection can make those gaps more visible. This productive visibility became even more evident in the group's cultural performances.

Because only two ethnic Albanians were present in the workshop, they were folded into small groups that each generated performances defined by that small group as a whole. These performances did not shy away from representing regional violence, but also uncritically reproduced patriotic tropes such as the Macedonian National Anthem, popular Macedonian songs, and folk culture emphasizing rural life. The majority of participants responded positively, agreeing that the pieces fully represented 'Macedonia'. But the two ethnic Albanians felt differently, noting that the presentations were entirely ethnic Macedonian in their perspective, erasing the historical presence of Albanians in the land. The ethnic Macedonians argued that 'Macedonian' should be interpreted to mean 'all citizens of the country of Macedonia' (15). Yet, as in the 2004 Seeds of Peace workshop in Ohrid, the 'Macedonia' presented by the dominant group did not make visible any aspects of Albanian culture within the country.

Working mainly with Israeli and Palestinian youth, Nava Sonnenschein, Rabah Halabi, and Ariella Friedman (1998) note that within intergroup encounters the dominant group tends to avoid power-analysis and to blur the minority group's identity. In situations of conflict, the dominant group also tends to focus on physical violence rather than 'symbolic' or 'structural' violence, which can include the conscious or unconscious repression of minority cultural identity and basic human rights.¹⁷ The responsibility for changing a conflict situation is thus often placed onto the minority group. This tendency appears even in the Community Arts Berlin seminar report, which calls for ethnic Albanians in Macedonia to speak out against physical violence, but does not discuss other modes of violence (18).

In general, reports and interviews with staff members cite reservations about the seminar's tense atmosphere. Yet, I argue that surfacing these differential intergroup perspectives allowed for a more complex understanding of nation formation and the relationship between a people and a state. In a 2001 email to me, Nele Julius-McElvany acknowledged that she initially felt badly about the seminar's dynamics, but eventually recognized that those 'bad feelings' may have been a by-product of vital transformations. 'Their slowly developing new views were in contradiction to most things [the ethnic Macedonian participants] had learned.' For the ethnic Macedonians, facing up to that contradiction may have allowed a more complex understanding of majority/minority relations in the nation-state. Comparative attitudinal surveys conducted by Julius-McElvany affirmed the sometimes painful, yet valuable, recognitions gleaned through the seminar.

Julius-McElvany had developed the surveys in order to address gaps in the assessment of youth seminars while completing her doctoral study in psychology. Prior to her study, the only statistically documented evaluations of EU-supported youth projects had focused on the experience of the seminars themselves, resulting in vague, positive responses that did not actually measure whether specific goals had been achieved. She designed the survey to assess specific changes in attitudes, measured pre- and post-seminar, about oneself and towards others.¹⁸ While acknowledging that the survey design had some flaws – including a ‘decking effect’ leading to less-observable changes, as participants tended to assess themselves as fairly tolerant and open-minded to begin with – comparisons between the Croatia and Macedonia surveys produced some intriguing results.

Though the surveys in both seminars noted little measurable change around feelings of optimism and life satisfaction (as these were fairly strong to begin with), participants in the Macedonia seminar expressed more positive attitudes about their ability to have impact on their environment. Additionally, while in Croatia, seminar participants’ attitudes about ‘tolerance towards the other’ showed small positive shifts, in Macedonia, survey results demonstrated a negative change (less tolerance towards the Other). This result proved disappointing to the seminar leaders; soon after the Macedonia seminar’s completion, Julius-McElvany noted to me that it ‘didn’t work’. Nevertheless, while both groups expressed positive attitudes towards the seminar as a whole, all of the Macedonian seminar participants rated their experience slightly higher than those from Croatia. They also claimed to want to keep thinking and discussing issues of nation and culture more than participants in Croatia.

Reflecting on these results several years later, Julius-McElvany wondered whether they might have pointed towards a different kind of operation. ‘Maybe knowing more precisely what you agree with or don’t agree with will be expressed as a decrease in tolerance’ (2007). Julius-McElvany’s reflections speak to Stanley Fish’s insights about the contradictions at the core of liberal democracy. In ‘Boutique Multiculturalism, or Why Liberals are Incapable of Thinking about Hate Speech’ (1997), Fish argues that liberal democracies tolerate difference only if such differences agree not to become fundamental, to instead submit to a regime of toleration. Liberal democratic states are unable to see this demand as a parochial concern rather than a self-evident truth that presents itself in the context of the ideal speech situation.¹⁹ The clear communication

of differences in Macedonia operated as a kind of Levinasian relational ethics in contrast to the EU's desire for a liberal democracy brand of codified 'tolerance' (a codification that also sustains the Balkans as 'uncivilized'). Through theatrical productions and reflections, the participants were able to witness to each other, and the majority population was able to recognize, if not to reconcile, their attitudes towards difference.

Though Between-the-Lines seminars were not explicitly framed as intergroup encounters, theatrical activities generated an embodied, affective space for collective thinking out loud about relations between culture (*ethnos*) and participatory citizenship (*demos*). The seminars surfaced what happens when the two modes of nation-state attachment do not completely overlap, reflected through discussions of majority/minority relations. These reflections resulted in activated project development in Croatia, and in insights about how the majority enacts power over the minority in Bulgaria. In one of two follow-up workshops, individuals who had developed civic projects based on their seminar experiences received funding and developmental support. The second follow-up workshop in Berlin built on discussions and performances generated in seminars. *Between the Lines* brought together 15 participants from all five Balkan seminars to generate an environmental theatre piece. This piece animated insights about the complexity of cultural performance in relation to the EU's regulation of borders and citizenship.

Croatia and Macedonia seminars had pointed towards the challenges of constituting identity 'between the lines' of newly drawn state borders. Emily Apter argues that control over those borders – defining both geographic terrain and the 'purity' of identities – allows states to manage subjects rather than to be 'subject to [their] control' (2002: 68). In grappling with the relations between nations within the state, the youth participants may have been working towards regaining a different kind of civic agency, one grounded in Rancière's ideas about participatory democracy rather than the EU's neoliberal regulation of borders and citizenship. The *Between the Lines* performance project drew attention to these distinctions for a multinational audience, expanding on what might happen when youth took some control of their self-representation between various vectors of identity in the Balkans and Berlin. I invite you to follow me once again in another segue back to the House of World Cultures, and to do so in a more engaged way, as an imagined visitor to *Between the Lines*.



Figure 3.1 Street scene in *Between the Lines*

Photo: Scot McElvany.

Between exhibition and performance: dis/play in the House of Cultures

It is mid-October 2001 and I am back in the HKW for the opening of *Between the Lines*. The design elements of the event have been installed on a maze of 20-foot-high whitewashed structural walls: Serbian political posters are plastered onto the street scene (Figure 3.1), Bulgarian trinkets are stacked at the kiosk, and Bosnian coffee awaits grinding in the café. A few performers scrawl graffiti onto the walls of the installation's Stereotype Room as Sarah Riese from Community Arts Berlin tucks performers' bios into newspapers from the Balkan countries represented here. Co-director Ivana Indjin gazes at a performer's personal narrative, blown-up onto poster boards and hung in the Autobiography Room. The 14 performers are scattered about the space: Radmila adjusts her military cap at the Visa Stand; Irena places a squat model of a church into the ensemble performance space; Goran claps on his grandfather's black wool hat and sifts through dirt from

Vojvodina in the Country Room; Sasha hangs up his army coat by the Kiosk as Vlado gets into character as a befuddled history professor. Video documentaries from the five Balkan seminars loop within monitors built into looming white columns as fragments of sound play in the Schoolroom.

Feel free to wander through the gallery on your own (Figures 3.1–3.5), but at the end of the tour there will be a scheduled performance. I will be your guide and narrator through this experience.

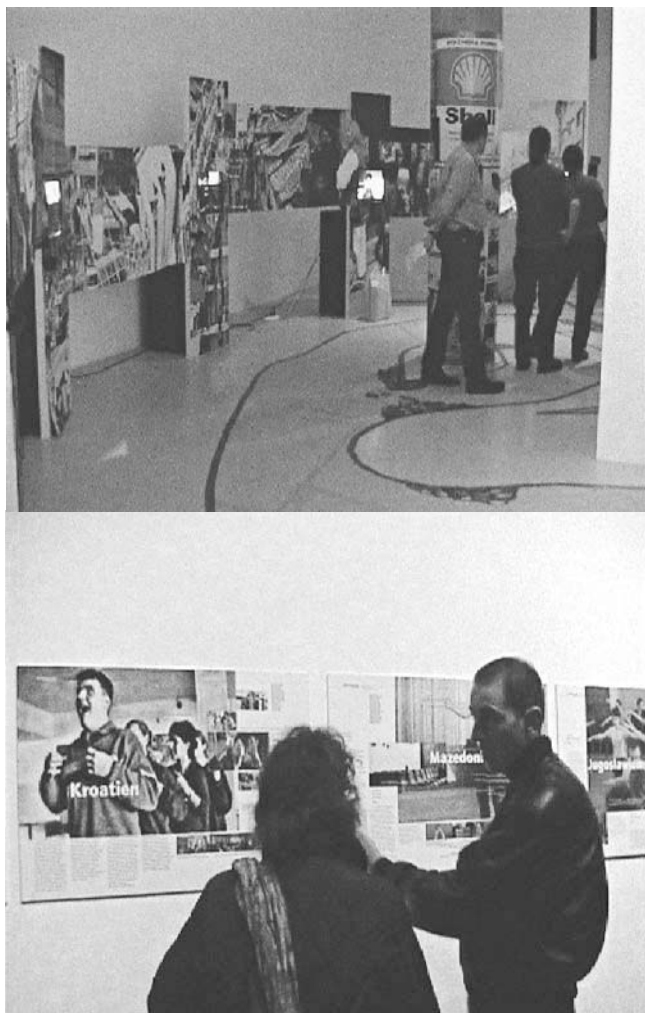
And who might 'you' be in mid-October 2001? Perhaps, a member of the sponsoring organization Schüler Helfen Leben; a staffer in an educational organization who helped slip the project into the House; an avant-garde theatre scholar from the US expecting to attend a lecture-presentation; an ambassador from one of the seven participating Balkan countries; a hip young Berliner who read about the project in Tip Magazine; a sightseer who stumbled upon the exhibition while visiting the HKW – a stop on Bus Route 100 that travels past a variety of Berlin's touristic attractions.

You may have come expecting to witness a project exemplifying inter- and intracultural awareness, to view an educational display of South East Europe, to attend a performance by and about Balkan youth. You might be documenting a program that you have co-sponsored, accruing cultural capital, representing your country, seeing your friends, or even performing your own ritual of citizenship.²⁰ Perhaps you have entered the House with a 'museum set' – learned expectations of how to view, analyze, and consume exhibitions.²¹ You come to gaze in wonder at exotic differences from your own habituated practices, or to marvel at the similarities that, of course, underlie surface differences.²²

Your expectations will be played with.

At least such is the hope of Henrike Grohs, a social anthropologist and co-director of the NeXT Intercultural Project, an independent organization that runs most educational programming at the HKW. She has worked to host *Between the Lines* at the HKW in the hope that this youth-initiated installation will signal changes in the philosophies and practices of cultural display at the museum.

Founded in 1989, for its first ten years or so the HKW presented performances and exhibitions from explicitly 'non-European' sites, commodifying modernist understandings of 'cultures' as distinct and transportable. Exhibitions and performances were regionally focused and framed within First World/Third World center/periphery logic. Promotional materials through the year 2000 separated culture by continent, medium, and topic. Though interdisciplinary in its focus, the HKW staged more clearly defined borders between some mediums



Figures 3.2 and 3.3 Explanatory boards and videos at *Between the Lines*
Photos: Scot McElvany.

as well as between a European 'self' and non-European 'other'. But in 2001, the HKW was in the midst of transforming its mission and practices, reconsidering exhibitionary procedures in light of increasing global flows of people and ideas and the theories that worked to explain them. As Grohs explained to me, 'The HKW refined its focus,

reflecting that, due to economic and political migrations, “the world” is right here in Berlin. Now the HKW is more theme-based, working with curators from other countries to define questions together’ (2007). Indeed, HKW’s 2008 website archives a list of internationally-renowned curatorial partners including Homi Bhabha, Marina Abramović, Walid Raad, and Paul Gilroy – who, for example, helped develop an exhibition on his conception of the Black Atlantic, asking what it meant to Germany and to Berlin. An updated mission statement now invokes the terms of cultural multiplicity and global networks, asserting that the ‘dualistic models based on the division of the world into a centre and a periphery have given way to a new paradigm.’ The center had also begun resituating itself pedagogically, moving from a ‘presenting’ organization that primarily figured visitors as First World consumers of cultural difference, to a more interactive, intercultural center imagining a ‘cosmopolitan’ audience (in the Kantian sense of world citizens) of experiential learners drawn by provocative questions.

On the cusp between ‘Europe’ and ‘not-Europe’, the experiential *Between the Lines* installation indexed a shift towards this new paradigm, while consciously referencing how ‘the Balkans’ continues to define the borders of Europe. Grohs had snuck in this ‘peripheral’ project between more established exhibitions (we used walls set up for a display of Chinese interior design). She did so to map the House of Cultures within the new ‘cosmopolitan’ German capital of Berlin. SHL was well-connected with the Balkan ambassadors who were then moving their embassies to the new German capital. According to Grohs, the ambassadors’ attendance at *Between the Lines* would help HKW develop international relationships within the city. Additionally, by working with several modes of performance presentation – including interactive installation, environmental theatre, and collaboratively derived ensemble staging – *Between the Lines* fulfilled HKW’s mission of ‘breaking through cultural and artistic boundaries’ while also defamiliarizing more mainstream methods of displaying culture. Through its performance practices, *Between the Lines* staged not only the Balkans, but also the changing HKW within the new Berlin – an emerging center of the ‘new Europe’ that required the Balkans in order to continue locating itself.

Of course, ‘the Balkans’ or ‘South East Europe’ would not be staged with any kind of uniformity. The youth performers from the countries of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, and Yugoslavia had all been through seminars (and life experiences) complicating alignments of nation and state, traditional ethnic

and global youth cultures. We had also spent three weeks together in a retreat center developing performances that imagined and intentionally disrupted understandings of 'Balkan culture'. We thought together about conventional forms of exhibitionary address and stagings of folk culture, and how we might 'play' with these forms.²³ The youth wanted more than simply to stage their culture as a performance for a Western European audience. But they also wanted to accomplish more than 'challenging expectations' about Balkan culture (or about the theatrical sophistication of youth performers). They wanted to creatively engage audiences in thinking together about more ethical forms of citizenship beyond felt attachments and regulated exclusions.

Between the Lines animated these explorations through a variety of spatially overlapping performances. In addition to a short ensemble piece, visitors encountered a series of installations within a Balkan street scene – 'alleys of Balkan identities' (Figure 3.1) – a setting that also displayed and played with ethnographic fragments of 'Balkan culture'.

[a red knit hat] [a leather journal] [a golden ring]



Figure 3.4 Bori Kovačs at the Visa Stand

Photo: Scot McElvany.

We can witness the exhibition's spatial dramaturgy as we return to our tour. There's no charge for the event, so we'll enter through the House's back door via the gift shop. You're welcome to stop, but there are no souvenirs from this two-day installation, so I suggest we continue. I'm afraid we'll have to pause here at the Visa Stand (Please see Figure 3.4). Bori has a few questions for you, similar to those she heard crossing into Germany from Romania. 'What is your purpose for attending the exhibition? How long do you plan to stay? Do you know someone in the performance?'

If you are a citizen of the European Union (or an ambassador), you will probably not have heard these questions at the border to Germany. But as the EU's Europa website reminds visitors in a lesson about 'Freedom, Security, and Justice', 'Freedom of internal movement must go hand in hand with increased controls at the EU's external borders so as to combat effectively the trafficking of people and drugs, organized crime, illegal immigration and terrorism.'

It seems that there's a lot of anxiety about that border and who and what might cross through, threatening the 'safety and security' of the citizens inside. The language suggests that 'the illegal' is located outside of the EU's policed boundaries, helping to constitute a civilized European 'us' and a criminalized non-European 'them'.

In 'World Borders, Political Borders', Etienne Balibar proposes that this anxiety in fact establishes the limit condition for European citizenship and civility. The Balkan Wars, in particular, test the capacity for Europe to define itself in terms of human rights as well as by a geographic area heavily policed at its borders. 'Europe' will only become possible, Balibar argues, when the Balkans are recognized not as a pathology, but rather as 'an effect of [Europe's] own history'; the Balkans are not an aberration, but rather a '*local projection* of forms of confrontation and conflict characteristic of all Europe' (2002: 74, emphasis Balibar's). Acknowledging that the Balkans are part of Europe requires confronting the notion that 'the criminals' as well as ethnic conflict and 'cleansing' are not *outside of* Europe's borders but are part of what constitutes its history. This recognition remains particularly important in Berlin, a site of Cold War divisions, genocidal erasures, and vexed attempts to alternately detach, recognize, and reconcile these histories within the 'New Berlin'. Within this city, infused with the residue of contested memories, *Between the Lines* performers hoped to foreground their beliefs that Balkan exclusion from the EU repressed a vital component of European history and 'civilization'.

Yet, one of the empty spaces on the map currently defining the European Union outlines almost all of the former Yugoslavia (absent

of more westernized Slovenia); this excluded border zone allows the EU to claim on the front page of its website that there have been no wars between its Member States over the past 60 years. Staging a border crossing in one of the EU's previously divided city centers worked to surface the inclusions and exclusions defining the limits of citizenship in Europe, replacing an image of the Balkans as a peripheral zone of ongoing interethnic conflict with the experienced reality of regulatory violence exercised by the state.

[a battered license plate] [a silver cross on a chain]

Let's continue through the exhibition. Unlike the border into the EU, everyone who ventures to this installation is allowed in. After passing through the Visa Stand, you'll cross a small wooden bridge and reach a narrow brown construction paper road secured to the floor with masking tape (Figure 3.1). From here, visitors make their own choices about how to move through the space. There's no one linear route or narrative and no way to witness all of the performances that might cross your path. The road splits into various side streets and rooms including a Stereotype Room, Schoolroom, Autobiography Room, and a working Café. And don't forget the performance at 8:30 pm!

Are you disoriented? Not sure how to begin? Immediately to your left (Figure 3.2) and in your program (Figure 3.5) you'll see information providing context for the exhibition, at the 'Programm-und Seminarinformationen'. The

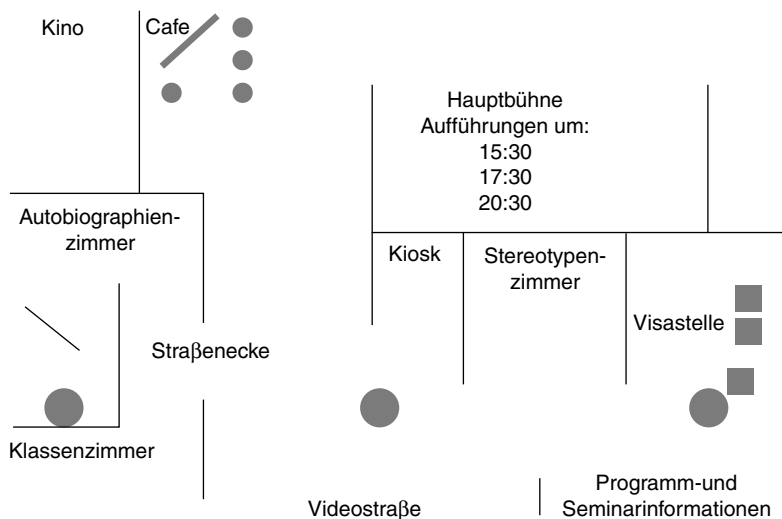


Figure 3.5 Map of *Between the Lines* provided for those who attended

familiar display format, laid out by designers at Berlin-based Archi|Me|Des, may help to orient some of you: poster boards describe the Between-the-Lines project and monitors feature videos and photos from the regional seminars. (I encourage you to look at Figure 3.3 now).

As you read, sound may seep into the space – singing from the café, taped voices from the Schoolroom, turbo-folk music from Macedonia in the Stereotype Room. You are invited to wander, to be a *flâneur*, a part of yet detached from the scenes you will enter, selecting what draws and holds your attention: 'What catches your eye? Your ear? How do you find out more when the text, the video, the image stops? It is up to you to choose the level of your encounter, the quality of your witnessing.'

[a burlap handbag] [a rubber bracelet] [a Dead Can Dance CD]

You might at first see yourself as a museum spectator who will encounter various ethnographic fragments: political posters, movie tickets, maps, bags of earth, a hand-embroidered peasant shirt, a model of an eleventh-century Croatian church, a full-length olive-green army coat, a hair band. These objects are sometimes bracketed – isolated on a wall or in a room without accompanying explanation. At other times (particularly in the staged ensemble piece) Balkan youth perform with the objects in ways that might contextualize or reframe them. These embodied encounters might shift your understanding of spectatorship. A final warning on the orienting poster boards may also impact your journey through the installation: 'Remember, that you may try to remain anonymous, but could yourself be the object of attention for others.'

[an Otpor resistance poster]

[a webbed wristwatch]

[a cracked mirror]

Between the Lines variously positioned the visitor as tourist, witness, *flâneur*, and object of another's gaze, playing with the tropes of museum display in order to invite reflection on how visitors might encounter the stagings of Balkan culture, particularly in relation to expressed and implicit limits of European citizenship. Short performance interventions generated by participating youth first complicate the production of 'authentic' or 'exotic' Balkan culture.²⁴ They do so in and around a Balkan street scene and within the various rooms tucked into its alleys. Let's peek into a few.

Ethnographic Fragments

To your right stands a wooden kiosk (Figure 3.6) stocked with cheap plastic souvenirs and newspapers. Straight ahead, hard wooden desks and a blackboard have been placed in the Schoolroom. The Café (Figure 3.7) offers



Figure 3.6 Vladimir Košić at the Kiosk

Photo: Scot McElvany.

Bosnian coffee served at round metal tables and chairs. Political resistance posters line the walls of the street (Figure 3.1).

In some ways, these rooms follow conventions that Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett describes in 'Objects of Ethnography' as *in situ* museum display, in which mimesis contributes to the constitution of meaning around cultural fragments. In this display convention, recreated environments and re-enacted rituals include 'what was left behind' in a replicated format, as in the Café and Kiosk. However, many of the rooms in *Between the Lines* positioned the exhibited fragments as copies of 'the real'. Photographs of participants posing dramatically in 'traditional costumes' hung in the Stereotype Room and the Autobiography Room featured magnified and rewritten versions of index card biographies generated in seminars.

This foregrounding of artifice appeared even more clearly when live bodies of participants entered the various rooms. At their most mimetic, *in situ* displays include 'actual representatives of the culture on display' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1991: 389). Yet, *Between the Lines* participants



Figure 3.7 The café

Photo: Scot McElvany.

did not sit in rooms and re-enact what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett refers to as 'typical cultural performances' such as weddings or funerals, or 'the drama of the quotidian' – nursing a baby, cooking, or smoking (1991: 405). They instead created mini-performances that sharply questioned the homogeneity and stability of their national and cultural backgrounds, while upending expectations of the activities that might be engaged in the various rooms.

Let's pause for a moment in the Schoolroom to see what we might encounter.

Take a seat at one of the desks. Listen closely and you'll hear a soundscape, recorded by participants in English and German, looping fragmented commentary about shifts in education following the break up of Yugoslavia. As you're listening, a young man appears dressed in a bright yellow T-shirt. He plays out a movement series rooted in gestural behaviors (Figure 3.8). Looking straight ahead, he raises his left hand in a pledge as his right hand points threateningly. If you've been to the Autobiography Room, you might remember the performer as Sasha, a former student and boy scout, an almost soldier from the Serbian Republic of Bosnia. Don't worry if you haven't taken

this in yet, you'll hear more from Sasha himself at the scheduled ensemble performance.

In the meantime, a group of youth from Yugoslavia – Serbia, Vojvodina, and Montenegro – interrupts Sasha's performance. A sturdy young woman in a ponytail, Gloria, first rushes in, looks around wildly, then uncaps a can of shaving cream in order to spray a five-pointed star onto the blackboard. You may recognize this symbol from the old Yugoslav flag hanging in the Country Room. Gloria dashes out as Aleks (in actuality a radical Serbian student activist) stalks in and smears away the star. In its place, he sprays a cross with four Cyrillic letter Cs in each corner. It's a sign you will have seen on the street outside of the room, accompanied by the phrase 'Samo Serbi Sa Srbiju', which roughly translates to 'Only Serbs in Serbia'. Vlado, a tall young man, has by now calmly entered. He genuflects and deliberately wipes away the Cyrillic letters while lengthening the cross's verticality. He transforms an ethnic national symbol to the more temperate religious unification of the Orthodox cross. After Vlado's stately departure, Goran enters, shaking his head at the mess. He wipes the cross away with a handkerchief carefully writing 'UN' over the still visible remnants of the past symbolic narratives. Goran then drops his lightly-worn characterization as a UN official and speaks the piece's one line. 'Schools become churches become prisons become schools.' This has been part of the youths' education during ten years of civil and interethnic war.

The youth developed these performances as a way to move beyond 'explanations' of what they had experienced growing up in a continuously revised 'Yugoslavia'. They hoped to instead share their own subjective confusions, as in Sasha's performance, or to allegorize their experience. They wanted to pose questions about what authority generated different reconstructions of Yugoslavia – political, religious, and supranational – and through what means. Through their characterizations, they tried to communicate what it felt to be viscerally impacted but to have no say in those revisions. The UN character, in particular, represented for them an experiential sense of 'civilized distaste' for the Balkan mess from what participants referred to as 'the West'.

Other short performances addressed feelings of belonging or detachment from a particular country. These feelings were sometimes inflected by the majority/minority relationship dynamics that had been exposed and explored in seminars.

For those who have not yet ventured into the Autobiography Room, or read some of the posted narratives, let's move next door. We'll witness two pieces from Albania and Romania.

If you look on your program you'll see that Violeta's is entitled 'Fatherland'. She enters costumed in a long, brown-linen Albanian dress, her face veiled. She



Figure 3.8 Sasha Ašentić in the Schoolroom

Photo: Scot McElvany.



Figure 3.9 Goran Lazičić in the Country Room

Photo: Scot McElvany.



Figure 3.10 Street scene

Photo: Scot McElvany.



Figure 3.11 Ensemble performance at *Between the Lines*

Photo: Scot McElvany.

places four sticks of wood into a small square in which she stands and reads her poem in Albanian. She pauses and drags the sticks around her ankles. Still veiled, she stands amidst this pyre and reads the poem again, her voice trembling. At the end of this second reading, she breaks out of the pyre, and lifts her veil to gaze at the gathered audience. She then kneels by a basket filled with English and German language versions of the poem, which she passes out. You might now look at the poem from Albania and read a few lines:

*Fatherland is called the land where I was born ...
Where I have been growing up in small pieces ...
Where I would like to die.*

As Violeta departs, glancing back over her shoulder, Ruxa and Bori prepare 'Prayer for Romania'. Their biographies hanging above you note that Ruxa lives in the capital city of Bucharest and considers herself thoroughly Romanian and Orthodox. Bori comes from a smaller Hungarian village in Romania where she practices Catholicism. Bori kneels, clothed in the embroidered Hungarian peasant blouse that had belonged to her mother. She speaks her minimal text in German and English:

*In my country 9 out of 10 people call my village 'Napoca'
In my country 9 out of 10 people speak Romanian at home
In my country 9 out of 10 people make the sign of the cross like this*

(She draws a longer Orthodox cross in the air)

*I am from Cluj
I speak Hungarian
This is my prayer (She draws a shorter cross in the air)*

Bori then begins to sing in Hungarian. During this time, Ruxa has been standing behind a partition wall. As Bori sings, Ruxa steps out from behind the wall draped in a Romanian flag and begins to whisper in Romanian. She stalks towards the kneeling Bori, placing her hands on Bori's shoulders. The Romanian language drowns out the Hungarian singing until Ruxa looks down upon Bori; her volume lowers as Ruxa and Bori temporarily clasp hands. Both conclude their spoken/sung pieces at the same time with the phrases 'Amen' (Bori) and 'Ameen' (Ruxa). It is at this point that you might recognize the double and distinct enunciation of the Lord's Prayer.

We discussed in our rehearsal process how Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu had largely suppressed ethnic differences in Romania. Since his overthrow in the early 1990s, violence against Hungarians, gypsies,

and other ethnic minorities has increased. Ruxa and Bori's piece allowed the silhouettes of this violent past to emerge, locating difference within a supposedly common culture, while also staging the personal friendship that had developed between them. 'Prayer for Romania' worked to simultaneously mark difference, power, and the possibility of togetherness, shadowed by historical oppressions.

The image also mapped out some of the relational dynamics that emerged within the *Between the Lines* rehearsal process. Of the 14 participants, all of who were selected based on their ability to speak a common language of English, Ruxa, Bori, and Violeta were the only three who spoke non-Slavic languages. They sometimes felt isolated at meal-times, when a version of Serbo-Croatian was spoken by most of the other participants and one of the directors. They thus addressed their performances both to the other *Between the Lines* performers – as an expression of unification in the face of linguistic exclusion – as well as to a larger 'Western' European audience as a way to signal overlapping historical divisions and interpersonal connections.

Outside of the various rooms, you might begin to hear a babble of languages as Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Romanian, Hungarian, Serbian, Croatian, English, and German fills the exhibition space. Brief performances erupt, appearing sporadically, with sometimes indeterminate meaning. A collage of stylistic modes includes exaggerated characterizations, abstracted gestural vocabularies, and personal monologues. A chanteuse in the Café sings out a critical narrative of Macedonia. A Dalmatian housewife performs a piece by the Stereotype Room. Aleks plays history hopscotch. There is no set time for these eruptions; performances begin whenever there's an accumulated audience and stop when the performers feel like they're done or move into another space.

There's Vlado by the Kiosk. His history professor character is interpreting ethnographic fragments of 'typical Balkan culture'. He is now working with the Dead Can Dance CD, imagining the object as a defective Frisbee, a drink coaster, and a piece of wall art. He seems baffled by the impossibility of establishing the object's meaning. Aleks throws a small stone into the space and hops nearby. In his 'history hopscotch' each square represents a year. He lands on a 1992 and narrates events that occurred in Serbia alongside those in his own life, which often involved his political resistance.

Many of the pieces developed by the youth performers question the 'otherness' of Balkan culture. Most participants shared a common youth culture, with similar musical tastes and pop cultural references. (A mix of Europop and the soundtrack of *Hair* infused late-night parties at our rehearsal space). Still, the performers took seriously the challenge

of investigating their relationships to dominant (and sometimes dominating) national cultures, and to renegotiating their relationship to 'Europe' and to how they were historically interpolated into (or out of) various national and supranational narratives. These negotiations may become more evident in the scheduled ensemble performance.

It's 8:30. I suggest that we go.

Staging the Balkans

We enter a square white space tucked behind the Kiosk and Stereotype Room. The performers, dressed in black pants and multi-colored shirts, associated with their country of origin as keyed in your program, stand or sit against the back wall in various poses. They lean forward together as the sound of an approaching train – the 'Orient Express' from Boris Kovac's Last Balkan Tango CD – pierces through the space. The performers conjure the passing train with a collective gaze, and when the first blast of sound recedes Bojan calls out, 'Makedonia!' With the soundtrack continuing, the performers begin to stride through the space as though on a crowded street. They carry objects that may seem familiar, but are used in ways that again estrange them. Sasha boosts his folded [army coat] over his shoulder and moves to the sound of a boom box only he can hear. Irena licks her upside-down [church] like an ice cream cone. Elana speaks on hers [hair band] as though it were a phone. We continue to hear the names of the seven countries represented in Between the Lines shouted over the music, with a collective ensemble movement punctuating each cry. Finally Vlado calls out, 'Between the Lines!' as Kovac's chords conclude.

Each individual then introduces himself or herself, in English or in German. They note where they are from and share information about the significant objects they have brought with them. Familiar items – Gloria's red knit cap, Violeta's journal, Sasha's coat – are now recontextualized, attached to individuals and affect. We hear about the license plate Aleks found on 'the most beautiful street in Belgrade' that is now a market. Vlado pulls the silver cross from his neck that reminds him of 'the variety of religions' in his republic of Montenegro. Bojan shows us his watch, a present from his brother who he does not see much anymore. Then Sasha introduces himself, 'from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbian Republic', and talks about his army coat. It was made in Kosovo in 1975 'by Yugoslav standards' and worn by Serbs, Muslims, and Croats. This particular coat was, in fact, worn by his father. He pauses and looks carefully at the coat, before stating, 'I didn't want to wear it because I didn't want to fight.' He holds up the coat to show us a detail we may have missed. 'I sewed on these [red] buttons as a kind of protest.'

Through personal narration, the objects help to individuate participants from the Balkan countries represented, while at the same time

accruing more meanings. The army coat, in particular, becomes not only a detached ethnographic fragment, with symbolic connections to a militarized state, but also a synecdoche and a sign. Made in Kosovo, worn by all three major ethnoreligious groups, the coat stands for a unified Yugoslavia whose more expansive borders are protected by those wearing it. Yet, as remade by Sasha during the country's fragmentation, the coat becomes a sign of refusal, an individual decision to not participate in the state's destruction in a war rationalized, in part, as a defense of its Serbian citizens.

Having been seen in isolation, attached to personal narratives that contextualize and potentially reframe the objects, they again become transformed through a fable that resonates with recent conflict in the region.

Each performer has placed their item next to others on the stage floor. When Irena at last puts down her model church, she gazes through the whole display, examining each item, now resingularized through accounts by other performers. She kneels down between Bori's peasant blouse and Sasha's army coat and begins her tale, adopting a method of storytelling derived from Jacques Lecoq, in which objects are animated to shift perspective and scale. Working with objects that have accrued meaning through narration adds another layer of resonance to Lecoq's method. As the director who worked with Irena on developing this fable, I hope that this multiplicity of meanings will layer the story as it unfolds.

'Once upon a time there were two villages' Irena begins, locating the first in Bori's blouse and the second in Ruxa's burlap handbag. Bunching up bits of the blouse's sleeve with her fingers, she forms castles, houses, and a field. In the more 'traditional' village handbag she places the church and creates chattering residents in its woven corners. 'The villages were living together in peace and harmony. But one day', she pauses and looks up at us in the audience, 'the people in the first village started to talk.' Irena now shifts from narrator to character, inhabiting increasingly large bits of the blouse's sleeve: 'I need a bigger house.' 'We need to develop our economy!' Finally, she unfolds the arms of the blouse, lowers her voice and intones, 'We want more space...' The blouse's arms reach out to envelop the surrounding floor and creep towards the handbag. Then the blouse transforms to a sail as the villagers build ships, and into a machine gun when they need 'modern technology'. Irena then invites us 'see what is happening in the other village' and flies towards the handbag cawing like a predatory bird – the blouse's sleeves now the wings of a raven.

Reaching the second village, she changes pace, moving rapidly between representations of each town. The objects keep transforming, shifting the scale of events as they proceed. Irena marches with the machine gun-blouse, then dances with a guitar-blouse, then loops the handle of the burlap handbag into the trembling mayoral head of the second town.

Eventually she uses all of the objects in the telling of her tale: Daniela's hair band becomes a helicopter, Aleks's bent license plate a walky-talky, Goran's hat a tank, Bojan's watch a compass, and Elena's graduation ring a headlamp. Violeta's journal shelters a last-minute cease-fire meeting, but is slammed shut as negotiations break down. Finally, Irena takes Gloria's red cap – knit by her mother to keep her warm on cold winter nights in Subotica – and pulls it low over her forehead. She sits atop and then lifts the sleeves of Sasha's army coat to navigate its flight, dropping Vlado's silver-cross bomb on the handbag village. The fable concludes by shifting perspectives once again. Goran's hat looks down on this 'strange planet' from above, wondering what might have happened here.

As an allegory framing how economic development generates geographic expansion that escalates into violent domination, the fable can be interpreted through multiple lenses. It could be read as a broad narrative of colonialism, or as a more particular accounting of intergroup conflicts within Europe. The use of objects tied to specific cultures – the Yugoslav army coat dropping an Orthodox cross on a Bosnian handbag – may lend resonance to the fable in relation to the Balkan wars. But the lack of one-to-one correspondence between objects and nations, and the ongoing transformation of objects within the fable, forecloses any singular and consistent interpretation.

As a historiographic operation, the fable deploys a narrative structure that has been used by nations to construct and contain historical events. Yet, Irena's retelling refuses to establish determinate meaning. It is deliberately constructed to evoke multiple readings 'between the lines', including a narrative of the Balkan Wars and a tale of European expansion. In Balibar's words, the allegory potentially operates as 'a local projection of forms of confrontation and conflict characteristic of all Europe' (2002: 74).

The performance additionally situates the scenario as one of many ways of figuring culture and history. In its first section, *Between the Lines* individuates the seven Balkan countries represented through introductions from each participant, while also resingularizing ethnographic fragments connected to those individuals. The fable, narrated through a single voice, reintegrates those fragments into a coherent, if

open-ended, allegorical structure. The next sections juxtapose personal transitions with political events in the individual's home country, commenting on how history is constructed, in part, through mass media.

*As Irena concludes her narrative, the ensemble cast invades the stage space holding newspapers in front of their faces. Irena hastily packs up her storytelling objects into Sasha's coat and the rest of the cast pauses one by one to announce some headlines they have grown up hearing: 'Ceaurescu Overthrown'; 'Street Fights in Tetovo'; 'Demonstrations in Skopje'. Mass-media framings of complex conflicts are headlined here as dramatic events evacuated of agency and nuance.'*²⁵

The piece concludes with ensemble members wrapping their newspapers into tiny pellets and aiming them towards the audience. They pause, armed, perhaps inviting inquiry into what responsibility the spectators might hold for their frustrations, for how these stories get framed and consumed as simplistic iterations of ongoing conflict. They then turn and throw the pellets furiously against the back wall until their energy is spent and the pellets are gone. They turn back and hold the audience's gaze while pulling another news sheet out of their back pockets.

In the short segment that follows, we hear personal and national headlines from 1990 through 2000, accompanied by ensemble gestures. Performers speak of dictatorships felled, civic demonstrations, armed battles, and of political parties working together. We hear at the same time of the death of relatives, the completion of high school, of travel to new cities. The focus is on transitions and new beginning; history as a kind of Hegelian struggle as well as individuated accounting.

In its continuous perspectival shifts – from individual introductions to allegorical fable, from critical responses towards mass media to juxtapositions of large-scale and quotidian events – the ensemble performance strives to frame and perturb assumptions about Balkan culture and character. The accumulation of perspectives ideally generates a more expansive sense of where and how 'the Balkans' are located in relation to Europe – as a geographic space and imagined civil (and civilized) community.

The piece concludes with structured polyphony, a choreographed layering of sounds and movement, children's games and songs, anthems, and advertisements, sometimes overlapping, sometimes coordinated within groups of three or four. Occasionally a phrase or jingle will catch hold of the whole group, resounding in choral unity before again fragmenting... Music from The Last Balkan Tango fades away under this disjunctive symphony. We hear Boris Kovac intone, 'Auf Wiedersehen!' and the cast alternately waves, hugs, or mimes drinking in slow motion... The audience begins to dissipate. A few

individuals stay quietly seated, others speak with the cast, offering comments or requesting clarifications, some head out by the museum shop and Visa Stand, while others converge in the nearby Café, deliberately designed to be next to the ensemble performance space.

Although a virtual journey through *Between the Lines* must progress in some sort of linear order, the visitors' experience did not necessarily conclude with the ensemble performance. Some may have begun their journeys here, or skipped the staged show entirely, simply wandering through the installation at their own pace, attending to whatever caught their eye or ear, as a reader might flip through a book, pausing when an image or a sentence draws their attention. Those visitors who did attend the ensemble piece still proceeded back through the street scene to reach the exit. Many stopped at the Café.

Let's pause for a moment there to attend to some responses.

The staff member from SHL, Sarah Riese, chats with several cast members who she helped to select and worked with in the seminar; she expresses pride in how the political discussions she facilitated infused the ensemble's creative representations. Henrike Grohs, the NeXT staffer at the HKW, is delighted to be part of a lively crowd, one that includes Balkan ambassadors (though they have chosen not to hang around the installation or Café). James Harding, the avant-garde theatre scholar from the US, stays for a while at the café, animatedly speaking with many of the ensemble cast, who momentarily forego their installation performances in favor of this dialogue.

Later, Harding writes to me admitting his surprise at the theatrical sophistication of the event and his own level of engagement. '[The installation] demonstrated that the participants had coalesced in their understanding of how to use the techniques of performance and art not only to engage each other in meaningful dialogue but also ... to engage the audience in a dialogue.' He cites the way that the performances transcended national boundaries, noting moments that particularly drew him in. He concludes with words that continue to gratify me on behalf of the entire creative team, even if they are only indicative of one individual's experience. 'My sense is that there were many in attendance (and this was certainly my own experience) who initially expected that *Between the Lines* would merely document an important project bridging art and politics, but who found themselves confronted instead with a highly provocative series of performances that drew them into the issues which they expected to view from afar' (2002). This movement from detached understanding towards public engagement, arrived at through creative recontextualizations, acutely captures the intentions of *Between-the-Lines* as a whole.

As a co-creator of the installation performance I could not direct these responses or conversations, only try to generate a space where they might occur; a politicized space where South East European and German youth, theatre scholars, ambassadors, and tourists might reflect together on how 'the Balkans' are produced – through individual narratives, national myths, and supranational accounts, through border policing and media headlines, via visual and performance culture, as well as through institutional frames that structure but do not need to dictate our understandings.

The Café space produced not only a set of reflections on *Between the Lines* but also the animation of a more capacious public sphere. This set of dialogic encounters situates the HKW as a forum in which identities are perceived as relational and vital yet flexible, rather than stable, oppositional, or exclusionary. The point is not to reach some kind of consensus or conclusion, but to structure events that activate civic consciousness and public engagement. This forum evokes the kind of 'Europe possible' that Etienne Balibar conjures – one concerned with encountering rather than distancing itself from the violence and conflict that is woven into its constitution. In this context, the 'peripheral' border zones centralize what is necessary to generate an authentic 'European' citizenship, one more concerned with the never-easy struggle around human rights than with the defense of territory and identity and the free movement of goods and (certain) people.

As Emily Apter warns, however, detachment from national identity can produce the attenuation of common culture (*ethnos*) that leads to an atrophy of civic consciousness (*demos*) (2002: 69). But perhaps this civic consciousness can be practiced through dialogic, interpersonal encounters and collaborative projects as well as being mediated through the regulatory frames of the state. I propose that this kind of activation is one of the significant by-products of *Between-the-Lines*, which continued to run intercultural seminars through 2004. One participant, asked to reflect on 'security and safety', asserted in a July newsletter, 'We threaten our own identity through passivity and inaction.' Another exclaimed, 'We have found a great power within ourselves...to relate to others.' Yes, these are selective comments within a relatively contained set of projects. But they are animated within a growing youth network that sustains itself through debate, discussions, and the creation of multiple youth-generated projects that animate public spaces, including the founding of organizations and the design of their own seminars and theatre projects.

This youth activation still does not directly grapple with the existing fault lines in Europe, those that run through rather than defining

its outlines. Between these lines, a great deal more work must be done; and the shadows they cast reach deep into the Middle East. I invite you into this other contested space, to another border-crossing, one that launches an investigation into what kind of theatrical facilitations might most effectively reframe a seemingly intractable conflict over the right to fully *be* in a place.

4

Border Zones: Theatrical Mobilizations of 'the Middle East' (2004–2008)

It is November 2007 and I am in the passenger seat of a European-made car with bright yellow Israeli license plates. We pull up to a sign welcoming us to (and forbidding others from crossing) the Te'enim Passage by the West Bank village of Shoufa (Figure 4.1). Unlike most checkpoints, which are located within the Occupied Palestinian Territories, this one controls entry into Israel's 1948 borders.¹ A uniformed, armed, barrel-chested man with salt-and-pepper hair, his stocky figure enhanced by a bullet-proof vest, approaches the driver – my friend and fellow theatrical facilitator, Chen Alon. The guard checks the Israeli ID card proffered, which prominently notes Alon's Jewish identity, and asks in Hebrew, 'Why don't you drive through the Jewish lane?'² Alon feigns surprise about this distinction between the lanes, which he terms 'an apartheid scenario'. It is one that eases access for Jewish settlers, those who 'live in the region and are Israeli citizens', and their non-Israeli Jewish friends and relatives, who 'have the right to make Aliyah [immigrate]' to Israel.³ They travel on the Israeli-built 'bypass' or 'settler' road through the West Bank, one that cuts off Palestinian residents of Shoufa from those who live in Tulkarm.⁴ The 'Jewish lane' additionally separates out Arab citizens of Israel (20 percent of the population) and the few West Bank Palestinians with Israeli-state granted permission to cross through the passage.⁵

'There's a Jewish lane?' Alon inquires with raised eyebrows. The guard shifts his stance uncomfortably. 'Not officially, but *you* can go. It's for the, uh...' His voice trails off as he lifts his gaze to the top of a nearby hill, leaving us to fill in the unspoken ellipses: 'the settlers'. Alon looks into the guard's face, 'Do you think it's right?' The guard seems taken aback. 'Personally?' He hesitates, then answers firmly, 'No.' He shrugs his shoulders, 'But this is the policy. Next time you can go in the Jewish lane.' Alon gestures towards me, 'But she is not Jewish.' At his prompting, I hold



Figure 4.1 Sign posted in Hebrew and Arabic by the Te'enim checkpoint reading: *Welcome to Te'enim Passage. This passage is only for Israelis. It is forbidden to carry a person who is not Israeli through this passage. 'Israeli' refers to Israeli residents, someone who lives in the region and is an Israeli citizen, or who has the right to make Aliyah [immigrate] to Israel according to the 1950 Law of Return*

Photo and translation: Chen Alon.

up my US passport – which contains no information about my (secular Christian) religious or (Croatian-American) ethnic identity – and the guard looks pained. Though we are breaking the posted law forbidding non-Israeli, non-Jewish passengers, the guard waves us on benevolently. 'It's okay. Next time you can go to the Jewish lane.' Shaking his head with a faint smile, Alon drives us back towards Tel Aviv as he translates what has just taken place. 'You know the irony,' he adds, 'the border guard has an accent. He isn't Jewish. He's Arab – probably Druze [an off-shoot of Islam].'⁶

We drive on, musing on the events that occurred earlier in the day at the first meeting of the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv theatre group, a branch of the Palestinian–Israeli nonviolent alliance organization, Combatants for Peace, and a culminating case study in this chapter.

Events in the region often operate as microcosms of political power and struggle that index social and spatial dynamics. These dynamics include: oppositional victim narratives; asymmetrical control of resources, territory and movement; the complex relationship of religion to nationality;

as well as (sometimes violent) resistance to partnership with Israelis on the part of many Palestinians. They all help to constitute 'Israeli' and 'Palestinian' identity.⁷ The contested triangle of land between the Jordan River, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Gulf of Aqaba serves not only as a stage *for* conflict, but also spatially stages the vectors *of* that conflict, particularly control over boundaries of land, identity, historical narratives, and acceptable political action. That is, conflict centers not only on the land *per se*, but on who locates and controls territorial boundaries and passage through them, and what (often depersonalized) logic sustains that control.⁸

The checkpoint scenario concretizes these logics. The Te'anim Passage sign focuses on the 'law of the land' in determining who is welcome/forbidden to cross. Identity groups are quite carefully never named by type or ethnicity (such as Jewish, Arab, or Palestinian) only by area (citizens of Israel) and legality (those who *could* immigrate to Israel because of the '1950 Law of Return'). The appearance of balance between Hebrew and Arabic languages makes less visible these relationships of mobility, constraint, and definition.

Yet, the checkpoint is also a locus of encounter, where one can 'check-in' with questions about the occupation, as Alon twice chooses to do. He elects to travel through the slow lane rather than simply passing through. And he chooses to open up the resultant encounter to the moral contradictions of the occupation, asking directly about the 'rightness' of separation. It is an action that signals a much wider expanse of political activism – beyond mere opposition and towards engagement. This action, and my presence in the car as a reflective passenger, also signals the relationship that Alon and I have sustained over the past several years as partners in theatrical facilitation and in working out its impacts. These conversations and the events that produced them challenge the idea that the 'Middle East conflict' is static, polarized, and intractable, though it is often figured through a discourse of separation.⁹ Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the checkpoint is a trope that reappears in almost all of the theatrical case studies elaborated upon below.

The charged checkpoint scenario is theatrically attractive not only for the way it can highlight hegemonic logics, but also because it offers possibilities for repersonalizing and thus subverting those logics. Such localized subversions – whether in theatrical representation or through an event such as that described above – might not measurably impact the political and ideological systems and legitimate fears that sustain checkpoints. Those systemic and affective transformations require more



Figure 4.2 Map of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, courtesy of Hudson Map, based on most updated (2004) information provided by the UN cartographic department. This map does not indicate Israeli settlements or bypass roadways that break up the contiguity of the West Bank territory. The Separation Barrier remains under construction and it is thus difficult to definitively mark its path. Though different sources suggest slight alterations in its route, the path of the barrier is clearly circuitous and does not directly trace that of the 1949 armistice border or Green Line. For updated information about the barrier's path and settlements see: <http://www.mideastweb.org/thefence.htm>

efforts than a single conversation or theatrical workshop; they require long-term political mobilizations that reframe the logic of separation and the relationships of domination/resistance. But the encounter at the Te'anim Passage signals how interventions that catch individuals 'off-guard' can sustain mobilizations through everyday actions. Alon's interventions here also operate as Boalian Jokering, destabilizing received understandings through questions rather than statements: 'Do you think it's right?' draws out a considered reflection rather than a rote response. This chapter assesses the effectiveness of several encounter-based theatre projects in eliciting similar shifts in consciousness, building relationships, and precipitating daily and direct actions that can transform the conflict scenario that now largely defines 'the Middle East'. To be quite clear, from my point of view, the transformation of that scenario must continuously work against subjugation and oppression through violence by *any* means – physical or structural – and towards the mutual liberation and security for everyone currently living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I do not hold a particular vision of what that transformation might look like, for I understand this as an ongoing and quite difficult process that must contend with multiple colliding truths and the undoing of their certainties when detached from responsibility for the other.

While numerous 'social theatre' projects – Palestinian and Israeli – have dramatized and attempted to reconcile or resist aspects of the conflict with mixed groups of participants,¹⁰ I focus in this chapter on projects that use theatre as a *process*, one that mediates encounters between Israeli and Palestinian participants.¹¹ The four projects I assess differentially illuminate, contest, and expand the spatial and relational dynamics in the Middle East region; the projects focus variously on constructions of national identity and on political actions practiced in resistance to the Israeli state and Palestinian Authority. Those with the most impact, I argue, operate as social movements, reframing the political scenario through affective relationships based on alliance rather than separation.

As in the Balkans, I propose that theatre offers a site for face-to-face nonviolent encounters with the Other, prompting a development of ethical relationships. These relationships allow for the mutual analysis of more easily perceivable acts of aggression (situational violence) as well as less-obvious forms of systemic oppression (structural violence). While recognizing how experiences of victimization define the national narratives of both Palestinian and Israeli participants,¹² the most overtly political projects I examine reframe the struggle in the

region as one based on civil and human rights rather than on possession of property, historical legacy, and/or the manipulation of national narratives as rationales for physical or structural violence. All of the theatrical mediations I discuss provide alternate spatialities that, through embodiment and affect, illuminate and complicate the oppositional construction of national identity in the region. Some of the processes also generate new modes of being together. And one, *Combatants for Peace*, activates a human-rights based nonviolent political alliance that may most directly transform the conflict scenario.

In the four theatrical case studies that follow, I explore the dynamics of spatial and narrative control that define the contours of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, while citing embodied challenges to those narratives, and locating the projects within their institutional frames of operation. ‘Image theatre in Jerusalem’ details a workshop I facilitated with graduates of the US-based Seeds of Peace program. I focus on the construction of national narratives and identities among Jewish Israeli, Arab/Palestinian Israeli, and Palestinian participants through an extension of Augusto Boal’s image theatre techniques, while also acknowledging the viewpoint of third-party facilitation. The next section on *School for Peace* stereotype skits sustains an exploration of identity while adding an assessment of intergroup encounter, located within the theoretical frameworks articulated by the *School for Peace* and introduced in Chapter 1. I then detail the work of an Israeli–Palestinian interactive theatre group, *Viewpoints*, funded by the Peres Center for Peace. This section assesses how emotionally compelling, theatrically sophisticated, and humorous scenarios stage and deconstruct narratives of the Other, for and with Palestinian and Israeli youth. Finally, the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv theatre project of *Combatants for Peace* examines how long-term political alliance and democratization remodel intergroup encounter.

The documentation of projects deliberately moves from one that is US-sponsored, to two that are Israeli-based or sponsored, to a self-organized Palestinian–Israeli alliance. I concurrently shift from projects I facilitated to those I mainly witnessed. The tactics of engagement range from intersubjective and intergroup encounter (contact), to consciousness-raising, to mutual power analysis, to mobilizing alliance, to direct political action – describing a loose developmental arc for conflict transformation similar to the processes proposed by John Lederach (1995) and Harold Saunders (1999) cited in Chapter 1. While cumulatively examining nation formation and the effectiveness of relational alliance in diminishing political oppression and violence in the region, I also detail how the processes, perhaps unsurprisingly, constrain, react

to, and often mirror 'external' events and structures. In few places are relationships of space, identity, and control more evident than in Jerusalem, where in 2004 I facilitated a workshop with graduates of the US-based Seeds of Peace program.

Image theatre and nation formation with Seeds of Peace

It is a hot day in mid-July 2004 at the Seeds of Peace Center in Jerusalem. It has been a particularly tense summer at the Center, reflecting the separation that has increasingly defined social and political interactions. In addition to the separate languages, educational systems, national myths, commemorative rituals, and determined forgettings that together sustain distinct and often oppositional identities,¹³ the Israeli state and Palestinian National Authority were not speaking to each other, and neither were some of the Seeds of Peace kids. Thus, while Israel built a lengthy and contentious separation barrier,¹⁴ a few Palestinian Seeds stopped attending year-round facilitation sessions.

This particular Seeds of Peace program moved towards re-encounter. The Seeds youth would be working on three separate community-based programs, but before commencing these projects, they met together at the Center. There I led an adaptation of Augusto Boal's image theatre technique that clarified how Seeds of Peace youth deployed and related to various national narratives. The image work rendered a discourse of separation open to discussion, analysis, and even contestation. But what had generated and sustained this discourse in the first place? And how did our presence and our performances at the Center in Jerusalem complicate it?

Separation barriers

Like the Old Bridge in Mostar and the dismantled wall in Berlin, the barrier within and beyond Jerusalem functions as an iconic marker of separation and control in a city that defies clear divisions (Figure 4.2). As in Mostar, however, walking within the city can rewrite official efforts to stabilize those divisions. While the Old City includes Armenian, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim quarters, a cosmopolitan blend of residential and visiting pedestrians blurs any clear territorial boundaries. Additionally, sites that bear great significance for those of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic faiths, are located next to or even atop one another. Throughout the Old City, the chimes of church bells mix with wavering calls from Muezzins. There is no easy way to divide this city.



Figure 4.3 A few miles of the separation barrier as viewed from Jerusalem

Photo: Sonja Arsham Kuftinec.

Yet until 1967 a barrier stood between East (Arab) and West (Jewish) Jerusalem, one removed with great celebration on the part of Jewish Israelis at the conclusion of the Six-Day War to mark what was, for them, the city's reunification.¹⁵ A ring of settlements constructed around East Jerusalem later solidified this reunification. A Museum on the Seam now stands near the former East/West border, built within an old army turret, and housing exhibitions that continue to ask questions about the significance of borders, fences, and military control. My friend Tomer – a docent at the Museum, former Israel Defense Force (IDF) officer, and Seeds of Peace alumnus – took me on a tour, and we stood atop the roof as he pointed out the variety of religious, ethnic, and social communities in viewing distance: ultra-Orthodox, Arab, Middle-Eastern Mizrahi and European Ashkenazi Jewish, low-income rental and high-cost homeowner neighborhoods were all in close proximity to one another.¹⁶

Seeds of Peace youth who reside in Jerusalem have expressed varying attitudes towards the more recently constructed separation barrier. Jewish Israelis speak with relief of their ability to walk through the city with a greater sense of security, while Palestinians feel cut off from relatives in the West Bank or imprisoned within the city. For

most Israelis, the 'security fence' operates as a measure of safety; they note that suicide bombings have decreased since its construction. For Palestinians, the 'apartheid wall' or 'annexation barrier' serves as yet another sign of Israeli control over territory – particularly over borders and movement.

These differential responses to the separation barrier also indicate how Palestinians and Israelis define themselves, in part, through spatial metaphors of mobility and constraint.¹⁷ In her discussion of spatialities in Jerusalem, geographer Wendy Pullan underlines the power of architectural divisions like the barrier to structure politicized space. According to Pullan, walls generate the appearance of spatial division as rigid and absolute in ways that estrange those 'on the other side'.¹⁸ Such enforced obligatory estrangement prevents everyday contact, fostering constructions of ingroup/outgroup enemy stereotypes.¹⁹ As political theorist Maia Hallward notes (2006), most Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories know of Jewish Israelis only as soldiers and settlers. Jewish Israelis often know Palestinians only through images of Keffiyeh-clad young stone throwers or faceless suicide bombers who threaten normal social life with random acts of death and destruction. While less defined by enemy stereotypes than Palestinians, Arab citizens of Israel are often Othered as more 'primitive' by Jewish Israelis (as are Middle Eastern Mizrahi Jews by European Ashkenazim).²⁰ These large-group stereotypes remain difficult to overcome. Within Israel, Arab and Jewish youth tend to live in distinct regions or neighborhoods, and are mostly educated through separate school systems. Israeli state and Palestinian civic organizations resist encounter, either through unilateral detachment on Israel's part, or through the official non-recognition of Israel by Hamas, resistance to negotiation by former PNA leaders like Yasser Arafat, or the 'anti-normalization' rejection of contact dictated by many Palestinian organizations.

Yet spaces of relational encounter can supersede the polarization of bounded territories, especially when such encounter-spaces engage rather than ignore the occupation and the security threats posed by violent resistance. The uneasy coming together of Seeds of Peace youth from all parts of Jerusalem and beyond attests to the capacity for individuals to redefine social space, in part due to the Center's own physically (and philosophically) complex location.

Since 1996 Seeds of Peace has run follow-up programming throughout the Middle East, and from 1999–2004 at the Jerusalem Center for Coexistence. Within the contested space of the city, the Center negotiated a complex set of historically-produced geopolitical relationships.

Unlike Arab/Palestinians living within the 1948 borders of Israel, Palestinians living in East Jerusalem are not citizens of the Israeli state, though they do carry Jerusalem IDs that allow them greater mobility within Israel than West Bank Palestinians. At the same time, a number of Jewish areas have been constructed in and around East Jerusalem – thought of as neighborhoods by most Israelis and settlements by Palestinians. The Seeds of Peace Center was located in an Arab-owned building, in French Hill, a Jewish neighborhood/settlement in East Jerusalem. This location made it theoretically safe and easy for all sides of the conflict to reach. However, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza must receive permission from the IDF to travel to the city, and must pass through a number of checkpoints. For these and other reasons, some Palestinian Seeds chose their own policy of effective disengagement from the Israelis.

As noted, the strategy of the Center, led in 2004 by US and regional staff members, had been to organize a policy of gradual re-engagement. The ‘Spread the Word’ symposium I worked with focused on community-based projects, and took place in the middle of the summer following separate ‘uni-national’ meetings of Palestinians and of Israeli citizens – both Jewish and Arab. In contrast to this uni-national meeting, and to camp policy which selects delegations based on states, the Seeds of Peace summer programming in Jerusalem worked to negotiate differences among three distinct constituencies: Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem; Jewish Israelis; and Arab citizens of Israel, who also refer to themselves as Palestinians or 1948 Arabs.²¹

The Spread the Word program developed and supported community-based activities for each of these groups. Each group of Seeds’ graduates, aged 16–18, would work with an older Seed of Peace on projects specific to that group’s community, reflecting differing concerns about identity and occupation. The Jewish Israeli group, most of whom identify as secular, met with more Orthodox religious youth for a two-day facilitated encounter, a way for them to explore the relationship of religion to nationality and what it meant to be ‘Jewish’ in Israel. The Arab/Palestinian Israeli group documented the oral history of Arab villages in Israel, looking at their own conflicted identity within the region. The Palestinian group volunteered at a local children’s hospital, working with those most directly impacted by the conflict. Prior to their separate departures to begin their community projects, the three groups met together at the Center, connecting for the first time in six months for a facilitated workshop designed to elicit and examine national narratives.

Imaging identity in Jerusalem

The workshop (approximately 20 youth, evenly divided among the three subgroups) began with warm-up activities in English.²² The warm-ups intentionally resituated the youth as multiethnic 'Seeds of Peace', emphasizing a more expansive superordinate identity designed to reduce conflict affiliation.²³ The youth then returned to their community groups and I facilitated the image theatre activity.

As noted in Chapter 1, image theatre asks that participants embody concepts and experiences in a silent, energized, but motionless symbolic sculpture. Boal proposes that these embodiments uncover essential truths about society and culture, while creating a separate aesthetic space for reflection (1995; 2002). Images also offer a screen onto which a participating group can project a variety of ideas and interpretations, each animating their various world views. While Boal focuses his work on more consistently homogenous 'oppressed' groups, I have found that the work can be adapted in conflict situations to articulate community difference without degenerating into accusatory debate.

The youth participants thus worked in their subgroups to develop one or two images of their self-defined community's strengths and challenges.²⁴ The groups could choose to have individuals sculpt others, or could work more collaboratively and conversationally.²⁵ The images and the discussions they provoked tangibly reflected the different existential situations and intergroup relations in the room and in the region, highlighting the difficulty of sharing a 'weakness' or 'problem' in front of a perceived 'enemy'.

The Jewish Israeli group presented two highly concretized images, proposed and developed by different individuals in the group. The images focused on religious/intergenerational differences and socioeconomic disparities within Israeli society. The images suggested openness to communicating contradictory world views within their community.

Facilitation theory focused on intergroup rather than interpersonal relations asserts that Israeli–Palestinian encounters tend to reflect social group identification and power asymmetries. Jewish Israelis generally articulate a more differentiated sense of their society, emphasizing interpersonal relations rather than political concerns, while Arab/Palestinian Israelis and Palestinians present a more unified political front (Suleiman, 2000).²⁶ Not surprisingly given these findings, while the Jewish Israelis developed individually-produced social images reflecting difference and dissent, the Arab/Palestinian Israeli and Palestinian groups each created politically informed images with which their entire group (at least publicly) concurred. Differences in these images signaled

some of the complexities of nation formation among Palestinians as a whole.

In their very name, and in contestations over what they should be called, the Arab/ Palestinian Israelis suggest a complex and conflicted identity, and this group generated a single image reflecting that tension.²⁷ The seven participants stood in an outward-facing circle with one hand reaching behind them to connect with each other. The group's expressed intentions and the other groups' projections again surfaced the tendencies enunciated in social identity theory. A Jewish Israeli participant proposed a reading emphasizing interpersonal relations within the group: 'They share something, but they're apart.' In contrast, a Palestinian woman provided a more political historical analysis, linking the group to the Palestinian nationalist aspects of their identity. 'It's the Palestinian diaspora, but they are still connected to their roots.'

In contrast to either the Palestinian Israelis' collective search for their identity, or the multiplicity of views of their community expressed by the Jewish Israeli group, the Palestinians' images proved the most unified in their construction (at least as presented to the group), and the most provocative. These images were also the only ones to directly engage the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

While an array of responses emerged to the first image, conflating land and collective resistance with a Palestinian national identity,²⁸ the second image of Palestinian 'weakness' provoked even more differentiated yet respectfully attended reactions. In this image, four participants faced each other in a circle while one stood outside with his fist raised. Both witnessing groups of Arab/Palestinian and Jewish Israelis saw the image as representing an extremist suicide bomber breaking the unity of the more peaceful Palestinian majority. When asked to discuss their own image, however, the Palestinians attested that the man with the raised fist represented not a martyr/extremist, but rather a collaborator with the Israelis, undermining Palestinian unity from within.²⁹

This second image pointed towards the conflicting world views in the room and the distinct existential situations of each group. The groups produced not only different images, but also radically different interpretive frameworks. Yet, resultant discussions that elaborated upon these differences proceeded without volatility, perhaps because the image theatre process emphasizes that decodings serve as projections rather than authoritative definitions.

I argue that this revelatory moment would not have occurred in either a nontheatrical facilitation setting or in a more conventional

image theatre workshop that assumes a relatively homogenous group of 'oppressed' participants. By developing group images within an aesthetic space, and analyzing those images through projections as well as verbalizations, the responses catalyzed a sustained and mutually engaged discussion among individuals in the differentiated groups. As the youth participants stepped back to reflect on the session as a whole, their comments suggested a critical capacity to reflect metatheatrically on the power politics alluded to in the images.

As many of the Israeli participants remarked, unlike the other images that largely reflected internal group dynamics, the Palestinian images emerged in relation to an external force, the Israeli state. One of the Palestinians responded that the group did not feel comfortable revealing internal weaknesses (such as political corruption and nepotism) to the community they see as their oppressors.³⁰ A Jewish Israeli woman added that the images reflected the political reality of power asymmetry in the region: Israelis generally have the security and civic space to examine the internal dynamics of their community while Palestinians under occupation have more difficulties doing so. Public critique of the Palestinian Authority, or work with Jewish Israelis, can be seen as betrayal, and met with verbal and physical threats.³¹

The young woman who spoke of power asymmetry also cited the privilege of disengagement – that outside of a violent moment of crisis, it is easier for Israelis to 'forget about' the Palestinians.³² Though impacted by internal civic dynamics, for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories daily existence – freedom of movement and association, access to resources like water, electricity, and farmland – remains primarily controlled and defined by the Israeli state and enforced by its security apparatus.

Within the workshop, the Jewish Israelis saw their existential situation as one in which they had the opportunity to publicly enunciate more complex images of their society. Acknowledging this distinction established space for more authentic dialogue. Noted one Palestinian participant, who had previously avoided contact with Israelis, it was a conversation he had been waiting all year to have.

This kind of conversation, he later explained to me, had moved away from rehearsed arguments, oppositional narratives of identity, and unilateral detachments, to an investigation of difference in perspectives and viewpoints. Each group experienced raised consciousness about the ways that they constructed their social identity and how others understood (or misunderstood) that construction. The aesthetic space provided an alternative spatiality, one that allowed

distinct groups to examine together the discourse of separation. This coming together across difference animated a relational space that overcame estrangement while acknowledging material and existential disparities in the region, at least for an afternoon. In contrast to the lived realities of all three groups, within the framework of the workshop, no one group had the power to define another's existential situation.

**Institutional frameworks:
the political economies of Seeds of Peace**

Lest I overstate the transformative potential of this one-time exercise, I should note several limiting factors embedded in the context. The encounter was conducted by a US facilitator, in English, within the framework of Seeds of Peace, an organization that tends not to be self-reflective about its location within a global political system. Seeds of Peace can indeed be easily critiqued as yet another example of 'benevolent' US political-brokering, unconscious of its many biases.³³ Seeds of Peace certainly operates within a network of post-Cold War interventions that cast the United States as global facilitator (or disciplinarian). Nevertheless, I propose that the dispersed nature of the organization and its commitment to working with Middle Eastern as well as US staff allow it to foster more radical political interventions. Though SOP as an organization emphasizes interpersonal contact (the initial curve of the 'arc' I sketched out earlier), many of its members go on to enact more complex, politically engaged practices.

Ned Lazarus is one of these members. Lazarus co-founded the Seeds of Peace Center for Coexistence with a Palestinian partner, Sami al-Jundi, a former Israeli political prisoner.³⁴ The long-term partnership between Lazarus and al-Jundi models an alliance-based approach to coexistence that has gradually infused other parts of the organization. Since retiring from Seeds of Peace and beginning doctoral studies, Lazarus has engaged in theoretically informed critical reflection on his work in the organization. In a conference paper analyzing the organization's political economy (2007b), Lazarus notes that the program's focus on identity as the crux of conflict unwittingly obscures structural issues of power relations and resource control. For example, by providing scholarships to campers who cannot afford dues, Lazarus suggests that Seeds of Peace frames economic disparities 'as a matter of fundraising rather than as part of the conflict' (2007b: 14). That is to say, when detached from an analysis of how and why resources are distributed within the region, scholarship funding may preserve rather than transform the status quo.

At the same time, Lazarus notes that the organization serves to transform the structural position of individual Seeds within global flows of resources and capital, furnishing its graduates with access to higher education and professional opportunities in the United States, and empowering them as potential leaders of political movements in their societies. Lazarus points to the relationship between experiences of personal transformation (contact and consciousness-raising through SOP) and processes of large-scale political change. In some ways, SOP youth can be figured as what Antonio Gramsci terms 'organic intellectuals', individuals who have the potential to disseminate transformative frames to unify a political block. Indeed, many of the Seeds graduates with whom I've stayed in touch have begun to do so, working with organizations like Peace Now and the Israel Defense Force in Israel and the Freedom Theatre of Jenin as well as running for city council in an Arab Israeli village. It is too early to assess the efficaciousness of these political movements, and in the next chapter I introduce Wesley Days's praxis of disorientation – one that implicitly critiques Social Movement theories and a Gramscian framework of analysis. At the same time, I suggest the effectiveness of developing critical consciousness about the conflict scenario as a step towards its transformation.

Additionally, almost all of the facilitators at the Seeds of Peace summer camp are now graduates of the program. Most undergo a year-long training in Jerusalem informed by the intergroup power analysis advocated for by another organization dedicated to Palestinian-Israeli encounters, the Israeli-based School for Peace (SFP). Run out of Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam (Oasis of Peace), the only Arab-Jewish intentional community in Israel, the School sometimes adopts theatrical tactics to raise consciousness about the power dynamics operating in the region, while modeling an everyday practice of coexistence and power sharing.

Intergroup encounters at the School for Peace

My taxi crawled up the steep hill by the Latrun Monastery towards Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam in April 2006. Located between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, this Oasis of Peace is an intentional community founded in 1970, and currently populated by a strictly equal number of (mostly secular) self-defined Arab and Jewish Israeli citizens. The residents work together to challenge the prevailing discourse of separation in the region through civic partnership, running a bilingual primary school, and struggling to recognize and critically engage each other's collective traumas and commemorative celebrations. Lauded outside of the

region for its community-building labors, the Village has been critiqued within Israel as an unsustainable model of coexistence, requiring a kind of political moderation that does not reflect the realities of the region.

I had been here briefly in 2004 with Seeds of Peace (SOP), which had rented conference facilities, but this was my first time exploring the village itself. Along with a group of American and British 'Friends' of Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam, I spent five days touring the site and the region. In the village, we listened to a jazz concert performed by Jewish and Arab youth, attended an ecumenical spirituality conference, and visited bilingual schoolrooms and living rooms. We traveled to the West Bank to hear from nonviolent activist groups, and through Israel to hear from mayors of Arab and Jewish towns working together to ensure the equitable distribution of civic resources. I was most interested in the day we spent in a session with the School for Peace (SFP), a program founded by residents of the Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam village. Though not directly connected with Seeds of Peace, the School had trained a number of SOP facilitators – much to the dismay of the Israeli Ministry of Education, which sends delegations to the camp, and considers the School for Peace program far too radical.³⁵

This radicality is in fact grounded in the School for Peace's expressed assumptions of a power imbalance between Jewish and Arab Israelis, and a desire to deliberately adjust that imbalance. Citing postcolonial critic Frantz Fanon, School for Peace facilitators Rabah Halabi and Michal Zak position themselves as 'non-objective' but 'fair' researchers, asserting that 'objectivity will always be against the weak' (2006: 7). The School for Peace was established in 1979 as an educational program associated with the Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam village, designed to 'implement the founding principles of the community' by encouraging an awareness of the participants' role in the conflict, exploring identity through interaction with the other, towards the goal of creating a more just society (Halabi and Zak, 2006: 12). The School offers short-term workshops as well as graduate classes run through social psychology departments investigating intergroup relationships through analytic models grounded in postcolonial and feminist frameworks. To date, facilitators within the School have co-published a number of articles in academic journals, a monograph assessing the efficacy of youth encounters (Halabi and Zak, 2006), and an edited anthology on Israeli-Palestinian dialogues (Halabi, 2004).

Sessions are grounded within three basic assumptions: that encounter occurs between groups rather than individuals, that the facilitated session operates as a microcosm of external political dynamics, and

that participants carry within them deep-seated but flexible narratives of their sense of self and Other (Halabi and Zak, 2006: 12). The encounter session is designed to illuminate and question these narratives, and to grapple with the dynamics of power within and outside of the room. Led by pairs of Arab and Jewish Israeli facilitators, sessions run from three days to several months and always include a balance of Jewish and Arab participants. The sessions have an arc that includes getting acquainted, discussing cultural and political issues, and either running a simulated negotiation process or deepening investigations of difference through various prompts, including theatrical representations.

Like most coexistence group work at SOP, the School for Peace encounter model privileges the elicitation of consciousness focused on identity, power, and privilege. But where the image theatre encounter I led at SOP worked with three regional groups (Jewish Israeli, Arab/Palestinian Israeli, and Palestinian), the School focuses only on distinctions between 'Jews and Arabs' and mainly within 1948 Israel. However, the session I observed included youth from 1948 Israeli as well as from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Choosing how to reference the groups here becomes tricky. I try to respect SFP terminology ('Jewish' and 'Arab') while acknowledging how the youth themselves self-identify, more often as 'Israeli' rather than 'Jewish' and as 'Palestinian' rather than 'Arab' or 'Arab Israeli'; the lack of consistency in self-identification in and of itself complicates the 'intergroup' premise of School for Peace. In choosing terminology in this case, I work to retain some semblance of clarity while acknowledging multiple and colliding truths about how a 'group' is defined in intergroup dialogue. This definition becomes especially important because of the underlying premises that guide School for Peace sessions.

According to the social identity theories informing SFP methods, when individuals clearly demarcate their group they are better equipped to conduct a 'genuine intergroup dialogue' which is a 'necessary condition for coexistence' (Nadler, 2000: 29).³⁶ SFP grounds their encounter sessions in a belief that collective identities are constructed in part through stereotypes of the other.³⁷ Dramatizing these images in representational skits performed for each other raises awareness of the stereotypes – what SFP terms 'symptoms' of the conflict – allowing each side to examine and confront their beliefs through dialogue with the Other. This dialogue reflects, and – via the facilitators' challenges to the group – eventually reflects *upon* the asymmetrical power that School for Peace facilitators believe to be inherent in the conflict. Transformations occur

on an individual level towards the goal of building a 'humane, egalitarian and just society' (Halabi and Sonnenschein, 2000: 49). Thus, SFP shifts a discourse of separation to one of group identification and power asymmetry, and at the same time foregrounds the possibility of recognition, alliance, and transformation, possibilities that are daily activated in Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam.

During a late summer seminar at the SOP Center in Jerusalem, I observed two SFP facilitators, Jewish and Arab, conduct a training session for future facilitators (older Seeds from Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank). The first session began with stereotype skits; each group of Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Arabs had about 20 minutes to collaboratively develop short scenarios depicting what they perceived to be a 'typical' situation of the Other in action.

The Israeli group resisted the idea of the exercise, generating what they termed a *reductio ad absurdum* scenario of provocative Arab stereotypes: patriarchal Arab family with silent mother and daughter, hookah-smoking father, a son asking to attend a demonstration, and grandpa waving the key to his old house. This scenario significantly shied away from the stereotype of Arab as terrorist, focusing on and critiquing gender relations and claims to land. The Israelis alluded to but did not directly reference themselves within the scenario, yet in their scenario presented the differences and assumptions that tend to generate anxieties for Israelis.

The Palestinian group presented a more immediate everyday political encounter; they located their scene at a checkpoint. In this scenario, Israeli soldiers searched fearful Palestinians, demanding to see identity cards, and humiliating the Palestinians in a variety of ways while allowing a gum-chewing, cell-phone chatting Israeli teen to flirt her way past the soldiers.

Some more-or-less typical differences emerged in the scenarios including an emphasis on Western/exhibitionist versus traditional/repressive values as animated by the women's behavior in each scene, and the depiction of Israeli males as soldiers. Yet, a resultant discussion focused less on decoding these scenarios than on the response of the participants and the ensuing group interactions. The facilitators pushed the group to reflect on their process and how it mirrored the external conflict. Thus, though the Israelis had been playing what they felt to have been a sophisticated joke with the exercise, generating clearly cartoonish character archetypes, the Palestinians still felt misrepresented; they felt that the joke had been communicated at their expense. The Israelis were taken aback by this response. One

Israeli member of the group who had read Halabi and Sonnenschein's article on the SFP method marveled at how the group dynamics had played out. As he noted, and the group largely concurred, the Israelis had avoided power analysis while the Palestinians avoided considering the Israelis as individuals.³⁸

The facilitators and the group structure may have guided these results, in which individuals in the room represented one of two collective identities, Jewish and Arab from SFP's point of view, Israeli and Palestinian from the youths' point of view, according to the language used in the session. The strengthening of these identities in relation to each other was an expressed goal of that session.³⁹ SFP grounds this strategy in years of self-reflective work, and it is far more radical in its goals than most Israeli Ministry of Education sponsored encounters. As many SFP facilitators have themselves argued, however, three conundrums emerge from SFP practice: (1) The model does not allow for multiple points of views about the conflict within each society, or a multiplicity of imagined identities, instead relying on a polar image of oppression. (2) The deliberate reproduction of stereotypes may result in concretizing them, rather than problematizing them. (3) An emphasis on awareness does not necessarily lead to social transformation. As my Israeli colleague, a former Seeds of Peace and School for Peace facilitator, put it to me, 'OK so they are now aware racists? Aware occupiers?'

Making power inequities visible should not eclipse the deeper transformations required to actually change those dynamics. Yet, it's important to note that the example I cite occurred within a process of facilitator training. Though most participants, as Seeds of Peace graduates, were already aware of existential differences between them, they rehearsed the scenarios as a step towards becoming partnered facilitators of others' awareness. SFP considers this process of awareness as one of many steps on the arc towards longer-term social transformation.

Both Seeds of Peace and School for Peace emphasize ongoing work on raising consciousness of how group identities are constructed and sustained as ways of grappling with power relations. In their long-term work, they each propose a shift from 'problem-solving' and 'conflict management' towards conflict transformation, eliciting rather than eliding multiple narratives on the core issues of the conflict. Both organizations also provide some models for more effective alliance and longer-term political impact, though in the first case a third party frames the coexistence narrative, and in the second, partnership persists almost entirely within the 1948 borders of Israel. Examining and sustaining

relationships between Jewish Israelis and occupied Arab Palestinians reveals a different set of possibilities and challenges.

The next two sections move beyond the 1948 borders of Israel in many ways, first examining how polarized encounters can be extended through theatrical practice with youth, and then looking at how the conflict itself might be reframed through long-term political alliance with adults. Both sections examine the use of personal narrative and relational affect in addition to images and grounded scenarios. And both expose the limits of theatre in generating alternative spatialities that challenge and yet remain impacted by the political context.

Viewpoints on theatrical encounters

The scene I am reviewing on an archival video takes place in an Israeli high school classroom in 2004.⁴⁰ Leather-bound books, cheerful plants, and colorful construction paper collages line the walls. The students clad in jeans and T-shirts gather, chatting in Hebrew. One young girl leaps into the room, her hair flying wildly, before she plunks down beside a quiet, freckle-faced boy. They are there to witness Viewpoints, an Israeli–Palestinian interactive theatre group (unrelated to Ann Bogart’s viewpoints work) that will present a variety of scenarios generated by members of the company – two Palestinians, two Jewish Israelis, and one Arab/Palestinian citizen of Israel, who serves a typical role as mediator, translating between Hebrew and Arabic.

Viewpoints is a theatre project of the Israeli-based Peres Center for Peace. Founded in 1996 by former Israeli President Shimon Peres, PCP situates itself as a non-partisan, non-profit, and nongovernmental organization. The Center supports a number of joint Palestinian–Israeli projects designed to develop an ‘infrastructure for peace and reconciliation’ through ‘socio-economic development’ and ‘people-to-people’ initiatives (Peres Center). Supported by individual fundraising within and outside of Israel, the Center carefully positions itself as an advocate for sustainable peace and mutual development without any reference to the Israeli occupation. While adhering to PCP’s operational and philosophical framework, the Viewpoints theatre project more directly addresses the occupation, the fears and security concerns that sustain it, and the uncomfortable and traumatizing actions that result from associated prejudices. The company does so by producing a polyvocal and interactive set of narrative scenarios associated with the conflict.

In 2002, a small group of Israeli and Palestinian actors gathered outside of the contested territories in which they lived, working long, difficult days on the island of Malta with Hebrew Theatre director Igal Ezraty. Over the next several years, as the company toured to schools, new actors added their own narratives, developed from moments of transition, trauma, and questioning in their life stories. This generative process mirrored the dynamics of the conflict. As Palestinian actress Ihsan Turkiyye reflects, 'We have sometimes a misunderstanding between the actors. It's difficult when it's competing groups. Everyone wants to show that his people are nice and full of morals. But the reality is not like that.'⁴¹

Turkiyye's capacity to articulate this more complex 'reality' and its set of 'colliding truths', represents a significant shift in her own viewpoint, one that unfolded over several years in dialogue with Israeli actors. It is a shift from what social psychologist, Herbert Kelman, refers to as 'negative interdependence' – identity constructed in opposition to an Other group – towards more positive, expansive, and relational formulations (1999: 583). The resultant capacity to attend to the narrative of the Other is reflected in some of the scenarios selected for the show. These scenarios serve as both the culmination (for Viewpoints actors) and foundation (for youth spect-actors) of an interactive process initiated by Chen Alon after he joined the group. The theatrical encounters attest to how polarized identities can be examined, leading to a confrontation of political inequities, and within the Viewpoints company, to alliance-based partnership.⁴²

The various phases of the Viewpoints project – from actors generating scenarios, to the performance of an interactive forum scene with separate groups of Palestinian and Jewish Israeli students, to the development of longer-term projects with these youth – move from witnessing to intervention to direct encounter. The process generates situations that allow for redefinition and emotional identification with the Other, raising consciousness about the power relations in the region while activating political alliance within the Viewpoints group.

Generating scenarios, concretizing traumas

The scenarios developed within Viewpoints from the personal experiences of the actors serve two main purposes: they expose the humanity of both the oppressor and oppressed while offering internal critiques that complicate assumptions about homogenous 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' cultures. Both types of scenarios provide a concretized experience of personal revelation for youth audiences. As an example of internal critique,

Ihsan Turkiyye developed a scene that focused on gender politics within Palestinian society. Turkiyye vividly describes the generative event:

I made a scene from when I returned to Palestine after living in Lebanon. It was in 1994 and I took a taxi from East Jerusalem to Gaza. Really – you could do this then! But I have a Lebanese accent, so I was like a tourist. The driver he is touching me, putting his hand on my knee, and the Israeli police stop the taxi because it's swerving – the driver has his hand on me and not the wheel. So we make the scene, and in it I say everything is ok to the police, not to betray the Palestinian. Then in the theatre, I ask the children directly, 'Should I have told the police about him?' Even the Palestinian kids they say, 'Tell him, tell him. You have to tell the police, even though he [the police] is your enemy.' So you see, we make scenes that show more complications within our societies, also that have something about other oppressions.

(2007)

As Turkiyye notes, this scene expands the dynamics of oppression beyond the Israeli–Palestinian binary while demonstrating a capacity for ingroup critique. Her narrative also conveys the humor and vivacity that texture its theatrical retelling. Viewpoints scenarios emerge from traumatic events, but the company does not simply relate these events as documentary monodramas. Actors deploy humorous exaggeration, metaphorical imagery, quick-change characterizations, and ongoing transformations of theatrical props. The suitcases that carry those props re-emerge as bus seats, storefront counters, and stones. These aesthetics not only serve to engage youth audiences, but also to make various ideological assumptions transparent through their exaggeration, and animate an underlying philosophy of transformational possibilities. As the show progresses, the actors begin taking on roles of the 'Other'; a Jewish actor relating his surreptitious visit to a mosque, motivated by curiosity, physically transforms to become the blind Arab who unknowingly guides him through. Palestinian actors perform as IDF soldiers; Jewish actors become Palestinians at home; and Palestinian citizens of Israel express their fear as Israelis riding on a bus with an Arab. Through this tactic, the actors actualize the goal of seeing through the viewpoints of the Other, without simply collapsing all difference.

The second group of scenarios focuses more directly on this politically informed humanization of the Other as generated through individual

transformations. The scenarios adopt *commedia* masks to symbolically portray these rehumanizing situations, with the revelatory moment conveyed through an unmasking. Some of these moments seem more revelatory than others, raising questions about whether humanization necessarily leads to ethical actions and systemic transformations.

Ihsan Turkiyye narrates an experience in which an Israel Defense Force (IDF) soldier invaded her home in Ramallah, a West Bank city. The soldier sniffled with an oncoming cold, and she spoke with him as a mother to a son, offering him an aspirin. From Turkiyye's point of view, the action humanized both herself and the soldier, exemplifying Freire's theory that the oppressed and oppressor both desire to be liberated from their roles towards the goal of being more fully human (2003). Yet, Turkiyye could only depict a transformation from her perspective. The incident did not necessarily transform the IDF soldier's subsequent actions, nor did it automatically alter the larger system that sanctions Israeli military actions. Israeli soldiers who invade Palestinian homes generally believe that they are acting in an internally consistent moral manner to defend their nation and state. So, the singular moment of interpersonal humanization might not trigger an ethical response in Levinas's terms – one that demands infinite responsibility to the other, though it could catch the soldier 'off-guard'. The event inspiring Chen Alon's scenario catalyzed a longer-lasting political transformation.

Alon's scenario also focuses on internal critique, but from his self-identified position as the oppressor. He narrates the transformation he experienced while serving in the Occupied Territories as a combat major. I describe the scene below as I experienced it, to convey the narrative as well as transformational aesthetic choices that inform its retelling.

Three actors clad in black and wearing leather character masks hunch together. Alon, in a half-mask, clasps his hands sternly behind his back and calls out in a commanding tone: 'Soldier, get ready!' He alters his posture and confides to the audience, 'I want to be a combatant. I want to be an officer in the Israel Defense Force.' Again, he shifts his stance. 'Day: today I saw a three-year-old child looking at me with hatred. Night. My platoon and I are sieging a Palestinian house. The family is probably sleeping.' The other characters stand in an image of sleep and Alon continues. 'We don't ask questions. The Shinbet [internal security forces] know what they are doing. The goal: to arrest the wanted man. To prevent the next terror attack. Is he there?' The masked Palestinian characters awake, startled, and raise their hands into the air. 'No, he's not there. The instructions were very clear: if the wanted person is not at home we should arrest another family member to put pressure

on the wanted man to turn himself in. The mother held her son very closely' – we see a male actor pulled between the masked soldiers and a Palestinian actress playing his mother – 'and refused to let him go. We had to separate them but the mother didn't free her arms.' The other actors are now tensely extended. 'The guys raised their guns. I did the same.' The actors stretch even further. 'And then I felt it happen.' Alon reaches behind his head and pulls off the mask. 'My mask came off.' He pauses, looks searchingly at the mask in his hand, at the mother, and again at the mask, the persona of a soldier.

A number of theatrical aspects of this scenario strike me beyond its content. The shifts between temporalities, between narration and enactment, draw the youths' attention to how power is constructed and occupation depersonalized. Alon begins by physically taking on the persona of his former self. The Commander ordering his soldiers to 'get ready' has a *gestus* – a stiff wide stance with hands behind the back – that signals how that order requires no justification other than underlying assumptions about chain of command and that 'the Shinbet know what they are doing.' Alon's narrative also foregrounds a dialectic other than that between his past and present self. The contrast between 'day' and 'night' resurfaces the emotional realities of soldiering that are often repressed. The reference to the three-year-old child and the family in the 'house' that is under siege both repersonalize the impact of Alon's actions. The theatrical representation also spatially centers Palestinian bodies as actors and characters. Alon stands on the margins of this focusing image. Though mediated through the process of memory and retelling – as indicated by the character masks – Palestinians still remain level with Alon – even foregrounded – as independent subjects impacted by the story he is narrating. Their humanization, as 'mother' and 'son' as well as targets of a siege, contributes to Alon's unmasking. It is theatrically compelling and significant that Alon's mask 'came off' as a sign of raised consciousness produced through an internal contradiction; the ethical impact of his actions exceeded the intentions of Israeli security. Yet, the scenario also figures Alon as the agent of the mask's removal. Alon did not simply 'become humanized'; he was provoked by a Levinasian response to the Other-becoming-other in a way that was then *acted* upon. Shortly after the event depicted in the scenario occurred, Alon refused to serve any longer as a soldier in the Occupied Territories. The scene thus ultimately brings together the role of action in theatre and political activism.

The focus on the actor as theatrical and political agent is a distinguishing feature of both Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and of

the Viewpoints theatre project; according to Alon the generation of theatrical scenarios from personal trauma transforms a therapeutic effect into a political action (2007b). The enacted story of his transformation from soldier to political activist echoed and modeled his conversion from a more conventional actor to an activist-oriented theatre artist.

In developing this scenario, Alon critiques Freire's position that the oppressed must liberate the oppressors. 'As a former oppressor, I believe passionately in the need for the oppressors to release themselves from their role. In my personal liberation from this role, I experienced no less than gaining my life back' (2008a). According to Alon, this liberation of both oppressors and oppressed produces a more genuine dialogue on power relations that ultimately moves towards equalization. Though the scenarios offer differential reflections on ethical actions, by first working out their traumatic situations of rehumanization with each other, the Viewpoints company generates a model for political alliance, while also representing more nuanced and theatrically engaging portraits of the Other for youth audiences.

In the second stage of the work, the youth experience for themselves what it feels like to actually embody the Other within an interactive forum theatre scenario. The scene takes place at a checkpoint within the West Bank where two Israeli soldiers must determine whether to allow a pregnant Palestinian woman and her husband to cross from a village in the West Bank to a nearby hospital in Ramallah. Separate audiences of Arab/Palestinian and Jewish Israeli youth see the scene play out, and then, as in forum theatre, they can stop and intervene in the action. They first replace their group – the Israelis act as soldiers, the Palestinians as the couple – then they are invited to take the place of the Other.

From spectator to spect-actor

In this second stage of the Viewpoints presentation, separate youth audiences of Israeli and Palestinian students move from spectators to spect-actors, from Boalian-defined empathy (feeling for another) to sympathy (feeling with another) (1994: 42–3), and from unawareness to Freirian *conscientizacao*. Freire describes this kind of consciousness as one that arises from a dilemma, recognizing contradictions between, for example, state rhetoric and action (2000 [1970]: 109–14). As one Israeli student noted reflecting on the checkpoint scenario in the archival video I watched, 'it's a no-win situation.' She recognized the responsibility of the soldiers for both the security of Israeli citizens – the Palestinian woman may, in fact, be carrying a bomb – and the health

of the pregnant woman. According to Viewpoints actors, the forum scenario allows the Israelis to experience that there's no way to be a 'good' occupier. At the same time, the scenario does not resolve the dilemma of how an ingroup may defend itself without violating the outgroup's right to mobility.

The Viewpoints company proposes that oppressors will transform and individuals will change only when confronted with a contradiction that holds up the difference between their sense of a coherent ethical self and actions that betray that sensibility. Alon notes that this is a military tactic, to 'put someone in a dilemma where both choices are bad' (2008a). Viewpoints deploys the tactics in a more emotionally engaged and positive manner, to unhouse the youth from received habits of thinking and being. This activated shift of feeling-towards-judgment, articulated in Chapter 1, also indicates a reframing: from 'tolerating' an idea or a person to more fully integrating the being of the Other in relationship with the self. Moving from Other to other.

It is a principle of relationship proposed by philosopher Martin Buber (who had advocated early in the twentieth century for a multiethnic Israeli state). Across several works Buber suggests that social relationships should be predicated on conditions for authentic encounter that involve engaging with the other as a subject of relationship rather than an object to be understood or defended against (1992 [1965]; 2002 [1947]). To try and frame that shift away from an objectified understanding of the other, the Viewpoints performance includes theatrically sophisticated dilemmas derived from real-life moments of Israelis as occupiers, Arab/Palestinian Israelis as assimilationists, and Palestinians as patriarchs.

For the Jewish Israeli youth, participating in the checkpoint scenario heightened their internal conflicts through the activation of emotionally engaged sympathy. A male student who had played the pregnant Palestinian woman reflected, 'As a spectator I thought, "it seems so easy" and on stage I realized that they should let her through. She suffers. They have to let her pass.' As a spectator, the student had empathized with the woman in a way that naturalized her passivity. He expresses this relationship in the language of 'thought' and aesthetic distance. From his visual viewpoint, the Palestinians at the checkpoint had 'nothing to do.' Placing himself *within* the situation as a spectator offered another point of view: taking action led to feeling in more immediate sympathy with the dilemma of the Palestinian woman in a movement that shifted the student's consciousness. According to Alon, 'He felt intuitively in his flesh and blood how frustrating it is to be on

stage without being able to take an action; a feeling heightened by his stage partners' expectations for action. He feels the gap between witnessing and experiencing. He feels for the first time the lack of ability to take an action in this specific violent situation' (2007b).

The kinds of feelings evoked within the Israeli students resonate with Augusto Boal's critique of Aristotelian empathy.⁴³ According to Boal, when we feel *for* a character (em-pathy) rather than *with* that character (sym-pathy), we remove ourselves from the necessity of investigating causality, and from taking action to transform the conditions that lead to suffering, moving from judgment towards action (1994: 42–43). The forum theatre allows for the rehearsal of actions that ideally transfers outside of the aesthetic space. While I don't know whether the Israeli students I viewed on the archival tape followed up with more directed actions, their reflections indicated at least a shift in understanding the differential existential conditions of Palestinians and Israelis. 'I think it's very hard for the Palestinians', shared one young male, 'The checkpoints. The permits. And we come and go so easy everywhere.'⁴⁴ In a step towards generating a less ideologically polarized identity, and in moving from the personal to the political, the student began to see the occupation from the viewpoint of the Other. He also acquired more information about the occupation and the checkpoints, such as their location *within* the Occupied Territories, information that Alon argues is not available in mainstream media. Alon proposes that when the oppressor group has this information, most will likely remain silent and passive, but 'some of them will not like it and will talk about it on Saturday night with friends, some will protest, some will decide to disobey and some will find a way to struggle with the oppressed, to show solidarity and create alliances' (2008c).

Yet, the limited encounter of a one-time workshop again raises the question of effectiveness. Is the student simply another more 'aware occupier'? 'I do not underestimate the power of the media and myth in my society and don't overestimate the power of TO,' responds Alon. 'But I believe in humanization as a step towards the process of showing that violent struggle is not moral, and that it is as counter-productive to Israelis as to Palestinians' (2008a).

Another point of view on the scenario might help to clarify the limitations and possibilities of Viewpoints with youth. Across the border in the Occupied Territories, where mobility is indeed more constrained, viewpoints on the checkpoint scenario were quite different. The Jewish Israeli youth reflected on what was a new and affective sympathetic experience for them, leading to a less polarized identity position.

Palestinian youth in the Occupied Territories, however, had a harder time rehearsing what was, for them, a more familiar scenario, and with sympathizing with the Israelis. While the encounter with Israeli actors working in political alliance with Palestinians did disrupt a discourse of oppositional separation, the theatrical experience produced a great deal more tension than in Israel, reflecting the realities of the occupation.

Across the border: El Khader, West Bank

It is late November 2007. I am sitting in the passenger seat of a van that is waved through a checkpoint with barely a lift of the armed soldier's head to glance at our Israeli license plates. We leave the smooth, paved bypass roads, built for Israeli settlers and passing through Palestinian farmland, and swerve onto bumpy tar towards El Khader, a small town in the West Bank near Bethlehem. There is tension in the air, much of it emanating from Chen Alon who is again sitting beside me. This is Alon's first time in the village since he demolished a house here six years ago. It was the moment of his unmasking, the decision not to serve anymore in the Territories. It is also the first time that Viewpoints has performed in the West Bank, as other performances were with Arab citizens of Israel and Palestinians from the Occupied Territories who had been brought to East Jerusalem. For most of the kids in El Khader, it is also their first encounter with Israelis who are not soldiers.

We enter a room on the ground floor of the town hall. I am taken aback by the bareness of the space. There are no books, no décor, and not much furniture. Stamped onto the cracked plaster walls are signs indicating that cell phones, cigarettes, and guns are prohibited. A few staff members lean against the walls smoking and chatting on their cell phones. This makes me nervous, though the actors continue to rehearse. A group of children shuffle quietly into the room. The girls giggle beneath their hijabs as they file into the front row seats. The boys, their hair slicked back or gelled straight up from their scalps, sit in back, their faces eager and open. Just before the show is scheduled to begin, the Mayor of El Khader calls the actors upstairs to his office.

'He wanted to make sure that this is not "normalization"', Ihsan Turkiyye later clarified for me. 'He said it's a great opportunity to have a Palestinian and Israeli group to perform for us. He emphasized that the Palestinians are living the occupation every day and it makes life difficult but that we, the Palestinians, are willing to open a new vision for peace education.' Given Israeli sponsorship by the Peres Center for Peace, it seemed that the Mayor needed to assert Palestinian authority and agency. In order to maintain his political position, he also needed

to ensure that Viewpoints did not activate a 'collaboration' project legitimating the status quo situation of occupation. Turkiyye assured him that 'the show is within the Palestinian pro-peace policy,' and that it was 'designed for Israelis to recognize the pain of the occupation.' With Turkiyye's tactical framing, and the Mayor's seal of approval, the show proceeded.

The Palestinian youth leaned forward in delight, visibly and viscerally reacting to the show. 'We make it more funny so the kids don't get bored', explains Ihsan afterwards. The actors are physically agile and clown playfully with each other. But I also hear laughter of recognition when Ismael al-Dabbagh depicts a frightened Palestinian driver, and thick silence during Alon's scenario. The boys and girls willingly participate in the forum scenario facilitated by al Dabbagh (the Viewpoints joker always comes from the same identity group as the audience). Unlike the Israelis, however, the El Khader youth did not try to intervene in order to 'improve' the checkpoint scenario. In fact, when playing Israeli soldiers, they put more pressure on the pregnant couple. 'They repeat what they experience', noted Turkiyye. Al Dabbagh later translated for me what the youth expressed about their intervention experience. 'One boy said, "That's how the soldiers behave with us. It doesn't matter how I behave. The solution is not with us, it's to end the occupation."' ⁴⁵ 'In fact', added Alon, 'what is needed is to create a new reality, rather than only to transform the present situation.'

The Viewpoints actors try to model this new reality. And though the El Khader youths' actions and comments suggest despair, the youth also expressed amazement at seeing Israelis who were not soldiers, and who desired to end the occupation. 'I explained to the kids afterwards that when I was their age I was taught that they – the Palestinians are my enemy', adds Alon. 'I told them that I'm now interested in understanding what causes transformation in beliefs and thoughts, as well as the situation of oppression and occupation, through theater' (2007a).

Even in one-time performances, the embodied encounters with Palestinian and Israeli actors and with the Viewpoints scenarios ruptured stereotypes and inspired sympathetic identifications among both Israelis and Palestinians in their separated spaces. An even more powerful encounter emerged when the youth confronted each other directly.

In 2007–08 the Peres Center for Peace (PCP) sponsored two integrated projects that moved beyond witness and intervention to direct encounter. In the first pilot project, Palestinian and Israeli high school students met separately in a parallel process, followed by a day-long binational workshop. A year later, PCP initiated a four-month project

between Palestinian youth in El Khader and Hebron and Israeli youth in Yeruham, a largely Mizrachi Jewish town in the Negev Desert. Rather than responding to scenarios they had created themselves, Viewpoints actors facilitated workshops in which Palestinian and Israeli youth first developed their own scenarios and then encountered each other, planning to meet together every three to four weeks. The long-term project of direct encounter illuminated more complex relational dynamics than the one-time forum theatre. The project also showed how the external conflict was mirrored in and set the limits for what could be accomplished through youth encounters.

The limits of encounter: on the road to Yeruham

Another road trip through Israel in the fall of 2007. We drive three hours south from Tel Aviv through the Negev, passing numerous 'unauthorized' Bedouin villages and army training posts. The driver again is Chen Alon, who points to where he trained as an officer, Military Base Number 1. It is 'hardcore', he notes, the 'West Point' Academy of Israel. As we drive, Alon sets the scene in Yeruham.

In the 1950s, still reeling from the Holocaust, Israel initiated a proactive immigration policy. The policy was designed to help Mizrachi Jews living in Arab countries like Iraq, Yemen, and Morocco – who often suffered from discrimination – by transferring them to less-populated (and less desirable) Israeli areas like the Negev desert. This movement also served the dual purposes of claiming territory and generating cheap labor for new industrial production in the increasingly less socialist state. Many European Ashkenazi Jews saw the new immigrants as culturally 'underdeveloped', and Jewish Israeli society remains highly stratified, with Ashkenazim serving as the political and cultural elite while Mizrachim and Arabs remain in low-income brackets (Wurmser, 2005). In part to distance themselves from the Arab population, and to displace anger at the left-wing 'pro-Arab' Ashkenazim, the Mizrachim largely identify with right-wing political parties.⁴⁶ So, Alon explained that he understands the perception that awaited him as a 'lefty' Ashkenazi from urban Tel Aviv temporarily touching down in the desert to tell the Mizrachim that 'they must make friends with the Arabs.'

In fact, a few weeks prior to our journey Alon had asked the Yeruham Community Center director, a Moroccan émigré, if the Center youth might want to participate in the PCP theatre project. 'To tell you the truth', the director had admitted, 'I don't trust the Palestinians. But I'll put the project to the kids and see if they want to do it.' Alon had

convinced the director to allow him to share some theatre activities and talk directly with the youth. This evening was his audition for the project with the youth and staff from the Center.

We soon reach the Center, an old warehouse transformed by the Yeruham municipality with vibrant murals, a café, music and theatre rooms. Alon leads an hour of gentle theatre activities, after which a small group of youth, aged 14–17, sit down and burst into anxious Hebrew. After several minutes they gesture towards me; I sense that they are indicating that I don't understand the discussion. But I think that I do. 'You had a great time tonight and you want to do more theatre, but not with the Palestinians', I propose, and they nod in agreement. I hesitate about how to share the feeling I get from them, beneath their words. 'But you are taking a long time to say this. So I think that there is fear of the Other, but underneath that fear there is also curiosity.' As this comment is translated, the youth nod more reflectively. Alon adds that the process will change them – not necessarily in any political direction – but the encounter will change them. The tone of the discussion shifts as it models Alon's promise; there is no attempt to debate, convince, or discipline the youth. They stay in dialogue and eventually they change. They say yes, they will encounter the Other. But only once – they commit to meet with the Palestinians only once.

'When I began my process', reflects Ihsan Turkiyye, 'it was also with this sense of curiosity to know the Other. So this was the first thing – it wasn't about peace.' Adds Alon, 'I suspected the same feelings were happening with the kids' (2008a). In preliminary uni-national sessions separate teams of Israeli and Palestinian facilitators worked with each group, exploring the imagination of the Other through image work. The youth in Yeruham had a fantasy of the Palestinians as primitive and even monstrous. At the first session I attended, one of the girls expressed that she was afraid if she went to the bathroom during a binational meeting, that one of the Palestinian boys would knife or rape her. This kind of statement is not surprising in the context of the conflict with its spatial separations and related psychological demonizations.⁴⁷ In *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, Zygmunt Bauman notes the relationship between spatial and psychic distance and the production of strangeness. 'The unknown, in some ways, is not human, since humans we know of are always "specific"' (2001: 149). The Yeruham youth knew of the Palestinians without actually knowing them, and in some ways, without wanting to know them. The dismantling of the stereotype of the enemy would involve bringing the Arab Other closer to the self. This move potentially threatened a collective

identity as (Jewish) Israeli, an identity already frayed by an internal and internalized sense of otherness as 'Arab' Jews, a hybrid category outside of official intelligibility. Israel scholar Dan Bar-On broadly names this tendency to avoid deconstructing stereotypes as a wish to maintain a monolithic self-image, thus sustaining the notion of the self as victim of the other, and not incidentally, sustaining the larger conflict (1995).

Yet, in the first binational encounter, the Yeruham youth experienced a rupture of the demonized image. Using Boalian theatre games to avoid a focus on language, the youth played together, and through play, decreased the distance from the Other. They were stunned by small details, such as the fact that the Palestinians wore jeans and T-shirts, unlike the Bedouin Arabs that they knew from the desert. One girl admitted, 'Some of the boys are even cute', thus shifting the image of the Other from monstrous to flirtatious (which created great anxiety for the director of the Center). This encounter may have reduced the demonized image of the Other for the Yeruham teens, but according to Bauman, it might have done so more as a tribute to Israeli generosity rather than to the Palestinian rights (1993: 156). In later encounters, participating youth experienced more of what Alon calls 'critical equal participation', described more fully in the next chapter. Yet, the political situation, language differences, difficulties of Palestinian travel, threats from Palestinian radicals, and the Yeruham teens' anxieties all combined to prevent a deeper encounter from developing.

Before the second binational session a suicide bombing wracked Dimona, a town near Yeruham, and many of the Israeli youth chose not to attend the meeting. Somewhat curiously, they did not name the bombing as a direct cause (a few of the girls said they had a manicure class). By the end of that session, however, one of the few Yeruham teens that had attended moved from a position of defensiveness towards apology for the absence of the Israelis. In one encounter he had expanded his sense of identity, coming to see the situation from the perspective of the Palestinian Others.

Still, the project suffered from the deep-seatedness of the conflict, the visible situational violence in places like Dimona and Sderot in southern Israel, and the less visible structural violence in Gaza and the West Bank. Further political unrest led to the cancellation of a third binational session. And midway through the project one of the Palestinian facilitators dropped out. He explained that he had been offered a job that demanded his full commitment, but the project facilitators surmised that Palestinians who suspected him of 'collaborating' with the Israelis had also harassed him.⁴⁸

The project was indeed entirely Israeli-sponsored, and operated within a program, the Peres Center for Peace, that on its website situates itself as dedicated to coexistence, contact, capacity-building and cooperation without ever mentioning occupation. According to Alon, this framing is necessitated by fundraising: mainstream Israelis will support a 'peace' that connotes mutual understanding and the cessation of Palestinian violence, but are less inclined to examine the structural and systemic violence imposed on Palestinians by the occupation. Yet, the spatial dynamics of control in the region required the Palestinian youth and facilitators to always travel to Israeli territory through a number of checkpoints. The Palestinian facilitator, who I'll call Ali, noted to me that the Israelis could not really understand him, because they did not know what it meant to work within Israel without a permit from the Palestinian authorities. 'I was thinking of Boal's quote of Che Guevara', Alon reminisced in contemplating this dilemma, 'He says, "solidarity is running the same risks." We didn't do that with the project. So we are in danger of maintaining the facilitation inequality' (2008a), a situation that I address more directly in the next chapter.

In the meantime, the Yeruham youth continued to express reluctance towards encounter. At the final binational session, which I attended, only three of the Israeli youth joined over 20 Palestinians from Hebron and El Khader. I did witness a process of limited transformation even within this one session. One Israeli girl at first would not even shake the hand of the Palestinians, but towards the end of the session she was in dialogue with a group, speaking directly to one boy in English. In a final summation the teacher of the Palestinian girls from Hebron addressed one of the Israeli boys as being 'like her son.' And one of the Israelis – a settler who as part of her military duty worked with the teenagers in Yeruham – noted that 'something had penetrated' her about the process. In a final uni-national summation, the Yeruham youth noted a shift in attitude towards the Palestinians; one arrived at through direct and indirect encounters. Reflecting on their earlier assumptions, they noted this increased capacity to contain more complexities and ambivalences about the Other.

The youth also reframed theatre as an alternative space, not simply as a site to be witnessed, but as a medium through which they could learn about and transform themselves in relation to an individual other rather than an enemy Other. When efficacy is understood as examining oppression rather than simply building community, then conflict transformation work is grounded in an ethics of sympathy rather than empathy, and of intersubjective or intergroup encounter and *conscientizacao*

rather than individualized understanding. As the Viewpoints actors themselves propose, this is a more challenging kind of encounter that can lead to transformative political alliance.

Towards alliance

By all accounts, the encounter project with youth achieved limited success, and perhaps fittingly so. Peace and conflict scholar Mohammed Abu-Nimer notes that dialogue or contact can sometimes substitute for transformative actions, assuaging the consciences of the oppressor group while operating as a safety valve for the oppressed (1999: 152). Viewpoints actors have instead worked to reposition the terms of collaboration and alliance. The actors feel that their capacity to work together in a way that does not try to smooth over dissent and disagreement remains crucial to their political work. They seem to model what Martin Buber (1967) and Carl Rogers (1959) describe as authentic dialogue based on an awareness of the other's reality that does not try to impose one's own, but rather engages in a mutual process of unfolding. The development and selection of particular kinds of theatrical scenarios in Viewpoints generates a space for this unfolding, thus creating a foundation for multiple viewpoints within a framework of an agreed-upon political alliance. The theatre thus operates not only as a medium but also as a model for progressive political partnership with a clearly agreed-upon internal goal of ending the occupation as a step towards the mutual liberation of both Israelis and Palestinians.

This kind of long-term alliance, emerging from sympathetic relationships and committed to political and theatrical moderation, remains crucial for Viewpoints' company members in the current political climate. The last few years have seen the rise of Hamas, leading to territorial and ideological divisions in Palestine alongside political stagnation in Israel. Within this climate, and in subtle contrast to its absence from the Peres Center for Peace mission, the Viewpoints actors insist that they will continue to focus on the occupation and its reverberation for all Israelis – Jewish and Arab – and for all Palestinians, within and outside of the Occupied Territories. Working out a response to this crisis requires a long-term process of common struggle between radical moderates from both sides, working in a theatrically sophisticated form that demands sympathy for each other and against stagnation, hopelessness, and oppression. 'We need to build even stronger alliances', note both Alon and Turkiyye. 'This is the key to end the political oppression and develop the humanity of both sides, as partners in an ongoing process rather than as enemies in an ongoing conflict' (Alon, 2008a).

Fifteen years ago, argues Alon, 'you couldn't find one political movement that was a joint movement. But the most influential political movements these days are alliance-based' (2007a). While Viewpoints is not currently touring, Alon continues to work in partnership with another political organization, this one dedicated to reframing the struggle in the Middle East from one that is identity-based to one grounded in the development of equal human and civic rights: the nonviolent Palestinian-Israeli activist coalition Combatants for Peace (CFP).

Founded jointly in 2005 by Israelis and Palestinians who had once used violence against the other side – as soldiers or resistance fighters – CFP consists of a loose group of about a hundred male and female members who self-organize into regional subgroups with Palestinian and Israeli leadership. One of these groups uses theatre as a medium for interaction. In March 2008 the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv subgroup invited me for the third time to a meeting in Shoufa.

Mobilizations with Combatants for Peace

Five Israeli members of Combatants for Peace converge outside of Tel Aviv for the drive towards Tulkarm in the West Bank. Three women in jeans, their midriff and shoulders carefully covered, and two men, dressed in their everyday clothes, pile into Idan's car.⁴⁹ We drive for almost two hours through the farmlands of Israel's Arab triangle. We talk about Idan's current theatre project, which he developed with and about a Palestinian Combatant for Peace, Bassam Aramin, whose ten-year-old daughter was killed last year by Israeli border police. The Jewish Israeli actor who will play Bassam, Shlomo Vishinski, lost his own son, an IDF soldier, in Gaza. Idan, Aramin, and Vishinski all hope that the performance will expose the less-polarized dimensions of suffering in the region.⁵⁰

We are a little lost, but drive on, past orange trees lining what now appears to be more of a dusty walking path than a road. You can't really mapquest Shoufa; Israeli maps are vague about Palestinian roadways and, on principle, the group wants to avoid the settler bypass roads. Eventually, we find our way across some porous borders and creep up a steep dirt hill. We pass what stands for public transportation around here, a taxi-van full of villagers. Because of Israeli barriers and security concerns, residents of Shoufa can no longer drive the three kilometers to Tulkarm, instead having to travel an additional 20 kilometers around an Israeli-only road.

'It's a problem,' sighs Nour, a phrase he repeats often as the head of the Palestinian steering committee of the CFP theatre subgroup.

Sometimes IDF soldiers turn the group's members from Tulkarm back. Other times there are not enough funds to cover transport. This imbalance in resources and resultant Palestinian frustrations echoes the external situation, and has led to a rift within CFP. Drawn together over six months by affective connections, image theatre explorations, and direct political actions, the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv subgroup has weathered this crisis within CFP better than most. The steering committee is meeting today to consider a separation from the larger organization – a secession that Israeli members are hoping to avoid, but don't want to dictate.

We park the car on a patch of grass by the meeting site, where the material differences between life in Tel Aviv and the Tulkarm area are everywhere visible. We walk past some trash waiting to be burned and a noisy chicken coop waiting to be dinner, and enter into Ibtesam's concrete-walled living room for the meeting. 'You are welcome here', she murmurs, smiling widely beneath her hijab. She seats us on sofas lining the walls beneath visible electric wires. I look about, noting the photo of Yasser Arafat dominating an inner room; it is far more prominent than those of family members. The kids themselves are seated among us, serving sweet tea and snacks on plastic stools. There is no private meeting space for this activist encounter; the home is its locus and the family is involved.

Despite these and other cultural and material differences, despite the separations sustained by the IDF and by Palestinian resistance to Israeli partnership, CFP generally works in partnership, modeling participatory democracy and political alliance through a variety of events and actions. These events inspire, situate, and legitimate CFP's agenda for a spectrum of relevant audiences, including with the organization itself.⁵¹ Members share personal narratives of political transformation to build and sustain relationships. Their public forums and lectures educate mainstream audiences. Alternative memorials, such as one created for assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, draw a progressive but still Zionist Israeli audience. CFP members also confront oppositional extremists on both sides of the separation wall by harvesting olives or dismantling roadblocks together. In short, CFP uses some familiar tools of nation formation to generate alternative narratives grounded in democratized alliance.

CFP members organize these events as former combatants who have adopted tactics of dialogue, storytelling, and indirect confrontation to challenge a discourse of separation while posing ethical dilemmas to the mainstream population. In Social Movement theory, Robert

Benford and David Snow refer to these indirect confrontations as resonant 'injustice frames' (2000: 615). As with Alon's question to the Druze border guard about the maintenance of 'Jewish lanes' (asked upon our return from the first meeting of the theatre subgroup), CFP members use cognitive and emotional tactics to confront differences between collective self-image, policies, and practices. These CFP tactics strive to 'out-legitimize' an oppositional framework that sustains the current conflict, dramatizing inherent social contradictions until they can no longer be sustained by the populous.⁵² Thus CFP members hope to 'mobilize potential adherents', 'garner bystander support', and 'demobilize antagonists' (Snow and Benford, 1988: 198). Without abandoning attachments to identities as 'Israeli' and 'Palestinian', they work to expand those identities to include the relational perspective of the Other, and to accept the internal complexities within each identity position.

In their essay on collective action frames, Snow and Benford adopt the military terminology of 'deployment' and 'mobilization'. This seems appropriate in relation to CFP, whose members consciously revise the strategies and tactics learned as combatants: as occupying soldiers who have justified their actions within the terms of defensive democracy and as resistant activists who have rationalized violence without seeing it as a tool of oppression. Somewhat paradoxically, their status as (former) combatants within militarized societies earns CFP members credibility across a range of audiences. Their rhetorical adherence to 'Israeli' and 'Palestinian' national identities additionally anticipates a 'counter-framing' that might situate them as 'traitors'. At the same time, nonviolent tactics and alliance-based actions reframe relationships between the two states and peoples. This reframing sustains a focus on both resources and recognition through popular participation – mobilizing alternative narratives, generating new spatial and personal relations, and modeling partnership – moving from national sovereignty towards civic democracy with the ultimate goal of establishing a sustainable two-state solution to the conflict.

These goals can, of course, run up against the political realities that sustain separation, such as the difference in resources leading to the previously mentioned rift within CFP. Yet, theatrical practices informing storytelling, encounter, and direct action – particularly within the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv subgroup – strengthen CFP's alliance-based actions, generating affective attachments that expand relational identities and imagine new ways of being together.

Storytelling and personalization

Storytelling in CFP challenges two dominant modes of polarization achieved through spatial separation and militarization. Robert David Sack (1986) proposes that territoriality works through depersonalization deferring personal agency to some impersonal 'law of the land,' as the guard did at the Te'enim Passage. Militarization also depersonalizes the Other to shore up a construction of mutual victimization and defensiveness. Both modalities sustain patriarchal and hierarchical cultures. As noted, however, the combat status of CFP members impacts their capacity to reframe the conflict and move the mainstream. Both Israeli and Palestinian societies are deeply ingrained in a culture of the leader as warrior. Both idealize the soldier/martyr through private images and public spectacles.⁵³ Sharing narratives as former combatants resists depersonalizing patriarchal structures through a relational, affective frame of storytelling. Instead of linking to collective national narratives that emphasize often oppositional victories and traumas (Volkan, 1999), CFP members relate moments of revelation that shifted their points of view, expanded relational identities, and moved them towards nonviolent struggle.

As in Viewpoints, these stories repersonalize and reframe the struggle, generating a foundation for alliance-based actions. Israeli narratives, like Chen Alon's, tend to focus on moments of recognizing oneself as an oppressor. Palestinian revelations typically occur in Israeli prisons through daily contact with sympathetic guards or through educational reading groups that often examine Hebrew literature on the Zionist armed struggle (Palestinians sometimes refer to Israeli prison as the University of the Occupation). The CFP website features Suliman al-Khatib's narrative. At age 14, al-Khatib stabbed an Israeli soldier in the West Bank and was sentenced to prison. While working in the prison library, he began reading the history of the Jewish people. 'In fact', he notes, 'I acquired my entire education and constructed my worldview in jail. I never went to university, but I did attend the learning groups in jail every day. This is when I started having new thoughts about the conflict and the means for resolving it.'

Al-Khatib's narrative anticipates and publicly counters an oppositional frame that positions Palestinians as less educated and more violence-prone. At the same time, both narratives work to generate new collective attachments and identities as nonviolent activists within CFP. Where the use of personal narrative employs theatrical components of embodied dramaturgy and witness, the more direct

use of theatre with the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv subgroup offers a site to examine the effectiveness of movement and relationship-building towards direct action, particularly in the face of internal organizational crisis.

Theatrical encounters in Shoufa

It is November 2007 and I am in Shoufa to witness the first meeting of the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv theatre group. The Israeli women attending have joined the organization recently; for most of them, this meeting will serve as their first encounter with Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Unfortunately, about half of the Tulkarm CFP members are not allowed through the checkpoint to Shoufa; no official reason is given for this. Chen shrugs his shoulders towards his co-facilitator, Nour, and mouths 'security' in their common language of English. For the bulk of the workshop, a young Palestinian Israeli, Reema, will translate between Arabic and Hebrew. I witness in her body and on her face the struggle of mediating between these two languages and narratives, these two imbalanced components of her own identity. Other recognized systemic imbalances also mark the session. Nour and Chen planned the meeting together, but as the theatrical practitioner, Chen will conduct most of the exercises while Nour will help to frame discussions. Together we proceed to an empty house under construction to conduct the workshop.

Nour opens the session by speaking about the purpose of CFP: to work in partnership to stop the occupation in order to lay groundwork for two mutually secure and independent states. Chen then frames the theatrical workshop in relation to these goals, emphasizing that this is not 'reconciliation' theatre that builds emotional attachments but reduces the desire to act to transform the political situation. Rather, it is a process of democratization to work on concrete problems. He points out the absence of some Palestinians, and his presence as the main facilitator. 'We're not faking equality. We are not trying to show to ourselves or to the world that the situation is symmetrical. We are trying to use our influence to change the situation.' I recognize that within this situation, as an American, I represent a potential for such change. At Nour and Chen's urging, I talk briefly about theatre as a social technology that can move beyond spoken language, and also help to set up some of the activities. But I am here mainly as a witness, to communicate what I observe in dialogue with the group.

We warm-up together, learning names through play. We stretch each other's bodies, stretch beyond what is comfortable, learning to relate physically. During one exercise, Motassim puts my hand on his arm

to feel the bullets lodged inside. The conflict is both viscerally embodied and physically reframed. Chen invites Palestinians and Israelis to partner as Reema translates his instructions; the group then works in silence with their bodies. They create images of oppression – the Israelis are more abstract, while the Palestinians recreate specific events related to prison experiences. Chen moves beyond the images themselves, asking the group to propose with their bodies what sustains the oppressive situations. He then invites individuals within the images to move towards their desires, and we discuss the relationship between individual and collective liberation. The session concludes with binational groups creating dynamic images of what the theatre group as a whole could do together. One small group proposes Arab language lessons for Israelis. Another moves tightly together towards the window's light. A third marches together, pushing an obstacle of chairs out of their way. These are proposals that diagnose, rehearse, and model the possibilities for alliance towards actions, some of which will be activated in the following months. As well as generating proposals, the images activate relationships. A final conversation within the group illuminates what has happened for them in their few hours together, particularly in the creation of alternative social and spatial realities.



Figure 4.4 Combatants for Peace in 'the bubble' at Shoufa

Photo: Reut Mor.

'The difference from outside melted', observes Idan, as we sit mixed together in a circle. 'Games erase barriers', offers Yifat, noting in particular the obstacle of language. Another Israeli woman adds the importance of viscerally experiencing the borders that still exist. 'It does feel more mixed now, but there is fear to confront. Some difficulties we will have to dismantle together.' The Palestinians concretize the discussion of barriers and borders, emphasizing the way that the asymmetrical control of space and movement produces separation. 'It's difficult to get to Israel and for you to come here', reflects Motassim, 'I would really like just once to be by the sea.' As Reema translates this desire, it takes hold of her body; Motassim's emotions appear on her face and tears well in her eyes. 'I hope we will together dismantle the borders created by the occupation', Nour gently states, looking towards Reema.

We sit in silence for a moment.

Then the conversation moves from possible actions to reactions, to movements into and of the public sphere, to enlarge the audience for the work. 'We work here as one group', Nour reflects, then reminds the group of the work left to do. 'We want to show good will and talk to other Palestinians about what we create here. And we ask the Israelis for the same.' A number of participants agree that the theatre work will eventually be enhanced through performance of actions with and for a larger public. But they also articulate the importance of what has been, perhaps ephemerally, generated together. 'The feeling in this room is different from outside', reflects one Israeli woman, Karin. 'Tel Aviv is a bubble that allows the Israelis to ignore the occupation. The bubble of the workshop creates a space of coexistence, that lets us imagine a future together beyond the occupation.' As Reema translates this reflection, the Palestinians nod. Karin has expressed a resonant feeling in the group, one that Jill Dolan might term a performative utopia.

Dolan describes these performatives as moments within theatre that animate 'fleeting intimations of a better world ... one in which hope and a reanimated, more radical humanism imagine social relations as equitable' (2005b: 2). She clarifies that the utopias evoked are not specific and static visions, but partially grasped processes, 'a never finished gesture toward a potentially better future' (2005b: 5). Dolan's depiction is exemplified through theatrical events that bring together and activate spectators through the experience of common witness. The activated future vision in Shoufa seemed particularly significant in that it was both felt and embodied through acting *together* in ways that embodied the interchange of participation and witness. CFP members additionally distinguished between two 'bubbles': one that protected Israelis

from confronting the consequences of the occupation, and one that modeled a different way of being together in a site of egalitarian regard. The affective connections produced by the second bubble pierced the first, while sustaining ways and means for more productively constructing alternative future life worlds together, thus expanding the second bubble. This feeling of coexistence grew from a mutual witnessing of traumas, and a mutual commitment to nonviolent actions that would develop the security and humanity of all those in the room and in the region. Performing those actions, however, heightened some of the growing tensions within the CFP organization.

Activating images and performing actions

In May 2008 CFP members proceeded to animate one of the images of collaborative action produced at the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv theatre workshop. A group of Palestinian and Israeli women and men walked together from Shoufa towards Tulkarm in order to remove some of the concrete barriers of occupation: IDF created roadblocks. The action was significant for a number of reasons. By acting together to remove the barriers, the CFP members challenged a spatial and relational discourse of separation within the public sphere. Placing female and male bodies together in physical alliance also animated alternative spatial relations that challenged the masculinized and patriarchal militarization of both cultures. This alternative framing also activated a different set of power relations. As Maia Hallward notes, nonviolent theory conceptualizes power more dynamically than through mechanisms of repression and resistance. Working from a Foucauldian analytic perspective, she suggests that creative activist collaborations function not only negatively (countering, resisting, or rejecting domination) but also positively, altering power structures to produce new relationships of knowledge-sharing and collaboration (2006: 21–2). But even as the Tulkarm-Tel Aviv group pursued such positive power strategies, some of their interventions produced tensions within the larger CFP organization.

Initially, the Israeli CFP members had been communicating with the IDF commander, negotiating what kind of resistance would be allowable. After successfully dismantling the first barrier ‘against all odds’ (Alon, 2008c), They had agreed that the CFP members would walk around the final road barrier rather than attempting to dismantle it. But the Palestinians wanted a more direct action, and more say in decision-making. They had also earlier expressed concerns about their appearance together with Israelis being read as ‘collaboration’. The Israeli members of the theatre subgroup had thus agreed that the Palestinians

would determine the limits of their public work together. The Tulkarm/Shoufa members had asserted the need to mark their presence together with the Israelis within the Palestinian public sphere. They then asked to activate again what had been rehearsed together in the theatre workshop, to remove the final road barrier. In doing so, they provoked the IDF soldiers and border guards, who rained rubber bullets onto the group. The theatre subgroup's action thus raised the ire of some members of the larger CFP organization who felt that though the actions were nonviolent, they had provoked violence. The subgroup insisted that they had simply revealed immanent systemic violence.

The dispute over tactics remains in process, and as Benford and Snow argue, such ongoing discussion is part of how movements continue to generate collective action frames. For the moment, the theatre subgroup continues to meet in stronger alliance than some other members within CFP, but also continues to remain under the larger umbrella of the organization. Due to its international reputations and contacts, CFP has enabled extended mobility and travel of its Palestinian members. This, in turn, has developed the capacity of Palestinian leaders, as Israeli CFP members have begun to refuse invitations to speak and attend workshops internationally without equivalent invitations for their Palestinian partners. The theatre group in particular has succeeded in generating not only new frames activating 'critical equal partnership', but also supplementary identities as democratic activists. 'People want to join', asserts Nour, 'because they see what we are doing. We are part of a group and not just individuals resisting something.'

Mobilizing relations, performing democracy

Civic democracy involves far more than collective national attachment to a sovereign state, more than the election of representative leaders. Democracy must be practiced, mobilizing alternative visions of what can seem like an intractable, polarized conflict scenario. Genuine peace in the Middle East region requires ongoing alliance and mobilization rather than separation and a status quo stability that sustains unequal power relations. This requires social transformations within both Israeli and Palestinian societies while reframing the conflict from a discourse of mutual victimization and oppositional identity to a struggle for mutual liberation and security. The framing of separation resists this mutual struggle. According to Palestinian scholar and activist Edward Said, 'Rising beyond the endless back-and-forth violence and dehumanization admits the universality and integrity of the other's experiences' that allows the 'planning of a common life together' (2001 [1997]: 205–9).

This planning requires recognizing the full humanity of all those living in the region, while confronting complicity with structural and situational violence. It is a transformation energized from the grassroots. 'It is important that our activity is actually against both our administrations', asserts Chen Alon. 'The essence of theatre is action, and we are saying to the people don't wait for the leaders to make peace, don't wait for the leaders to change the situation. As citizens we are responsible to change the situation and the best way to rehearse change is in theatre' (2008b). I end with my own glimpse of what this change could look like: a non-facilitated event presaging a reality of mutual exchange and Levinasian regard that could someday happen without the presence of a facilitator or the structure of a workshop.

An alternative spatiality

It is November 2007 and I am in the passenger seat of a van carrying many people who cannot make Aliyah according to the 1950 Law of Return – Palestinian actors from Viewpoints. We are driving from the performance in El Khader towards a *hafla*, a party in Tel Aviv. I almost miss the border as a security guard waves us through. 'It's all about the soldier's mood', laughs our driver, Achmed, at my surprise. Ihsan is telling jokes about the occupation. 'You know we are happy with the settlements near Ramallah', she concludes, 'they stop the bombings and keep the electricity on!' We pull up to a building in central Tel Aviv where Chen's partner, Mory, welcomes us all through the passage to their apartment. She checks the gifts proffered from the West Bank: wine, nargila, a Bob Marley CD, home-cured olives, nana from the garden, honey-sweetened kenafee pastries. She asks in English, 'Why don't you all go into the living room?'

Chen places the food around a centerpiece on a low table: a model of the Al Aqsa mosque carefully rendered by Palestinian political prisoners out of paper mache. The Tulkarm theatre group members had presented Chen with the piece at their last meeting; it is a gift passed on to someone who fights against the occupation. Around the mosque there is kubbe and hummus, wine punch with cloved apples. There are games and music and dancing. We play a game called 'the wind blows' in which one person stands in the middle of the circle and calls forth commonalities that others might share. Anyone who shares that trait must run to a new location in the circle. We dash around maniacally when Ismael calls out 'for all those who passed through a checkpoint today.' Ihsan and Mory belly dance by the balcony where Achmed

smokes nargila with Ya'ara. Ali, who has not yet left the PCP project, dances with me to the music he has brought. In his gold chains and Adidas sweatshirt worn neatly over jeans clasped by a Bob Marley belt-buckle, he embodies a set of contradictions: the soccer-coach and reggae lover who studies Shakespeare and critical media. He shares his dream to stay in the region making visible the discursive formations of media culture through Chomskian analysis. He shares his dream to leave as soon as possible and come to America. We stop talking and murmur bits of the song's lyrics together about remembering, mingling, good friends lost, bright futures, and pasts that can't be forgotten. We are beyond storytelling. Beyond tactics of encounter, consciousness raising, and intersubjective ethical relations. We are creating a new reality.

But at midnight, when their permits expire, the Palestinians will depart, like a bevy of Cinderellas. Until that time we dance together at this *hafla*. It is a participatory performative utopia rehearsing a subjunctive 'what if' kind of history. 'Never underestimate what a relief a good time loaded with fun, fantasy, and imaginary escape can bring', I remember James Thompson and Richard Schechner reflecting in their thoughts on social theatre (2004: 15). When that 'good time' is produced *with* 'the Other' rather than on the other side of a separation barrier, the momentary event becomes more than a blinkered escape or a naïve bubble. It produces and rehearses an alternative future reality, a relational *feeling* and experience of difference that enacts new possibilities as it sustains future actions.

Still, we are not yet beyond borders; this subjunctive reality cannot be an unquestioned dramaturgy of hope. Everything is not right. Everything might not be all right. There are many people left out of the room. Others who will leave and not return. I will depart tomorrow having witnessed a great deal without full comprehension, trying to stay alive to the ongoing process, to my responsibility that should never be 'fully exhausted' according to Levinas (Benson and O'Neil, 2007: 45). It will be fairly easy for me to pass through security at the airport. It will remain a privilege for me to decide when and how to focus on 'the conflict'. It will remain my responsibility to witness to what I see, struggling to frame the relations of hope and despair, to move beyond a discourse of intractability without falling into an illusion of mere coexistence. I contemplate all of this several months after the *hafla*, remembering Ihsan Turkiyye's words:

It's not so easy to make a 180 degree change...I don't believe anybody who comes and says, 'Hey, I want to make peace with you!'

No. I think he is a cheater. We are human beings and we have to go through a process, and in this process, you will cry, you will curse yourself, you will curse everybody. You will curse that you were born in this world, that you were born in this country. But in the end of this process, you will see the change.

(2004)

Of course, not every process works in every conflict situation, particularly depending on how the terms of success are defined. Simply to encounter, and even to 'humanize' a perceived enemy Other in a facilitated situation does not transform the conflict scenario, and in fact, may preserve the status quo. But each of the theatrical encounters I have discussed here situate various possibilities and limitations for transforming the conflict scenario in the developmental arc that I initially cited. This arc requires the ongoing conscious contact and potential future political organization among Seeds of Peace, the power analysis and intentional living promoted by the School for Peace, the intergroup encounters and dialogic politicized partnership of the Viewpoints actors, and (most important in my estimation) the alliance-based political mobilizations enacted by the Combatants for Peace. At their best, each process moves beyond an empathetic 'humanizing' encounter that runs the danger of sustaining oppressor/oppressed power dynamics. At their best, each process recognizes and flexibly responds to the limitations of their effectiveness when impacted by the external conflict while still struggling to transform and reframe that conflict scenario. I am grateful for all the partnerships that I have experienced and witnessed within these models, knowing that the work is still in process and will continue to be deepened in practice and theory.

In the next chapter, I continue to assess the effectiveness of theatrical facilitations by examining the situational impact of four distinct modes of praxis, most of which I have observed and reflected upon in dialogue with the facilitators I cite. I conclude this study by evaluating how each addresses the terms of theatre, facilitation, and nation formation in the Balkans and Middle East.

5

Facilitation Praxis: Four Modes of Encounter

It is late August 2005 and I am guiding a group of worn out Arab and Israeli youth deep into the Maine woods. It's hot. We're frustrated. It's been a hell of a week. But they are curious about this detour. Normally we meet in one of several wooden 'facilitation huts' scattered about the campgrounds. We've spent the past six days in dialogue and encounter work as part of a Seeds of Peace Summit organized by and for older alumni of the program. Many have not seen each other for close to a decade. Since that time, conflict in the Middle East has escalated, becoming even more polarized, and the Seeds alumni have reacted in various ways. Israelis have served in the army as intelligence officers, teachers, and soldiers, while a few have refused to do so.¹ Palestinians have left their country to study abroad, or they have stayed fiercely rooted in their homes to fight for an independent state. Several alumni have worked as staff in the Seeds of Peace Jerusalem Center. They have grown nostalgic, indifferent, or skeptical towards the organization and the situation at large. These responses, infused with hope and despair, have unsurprisingly emerged within the microcosm of our facilitation sessions. In the middle of the week, the group felt that they were 'not getting anywhere' collectively. A few participants privately expressed to me that a US facilitator might not be able to negotiate the communication patterns of Middle Easterners. I thought they might be right.

So on the second to last day of the summit we left the shelter for the woods. I had contacted an outdoor leadership counselor who lived nearby and together we guided the group through a high trust fall. Though a cliché in the rituals of group bonding, the embodied exercise led the Seeds alumni to discover how much they had accomplished by moving away from discussion. They reflected on the good feelings experienced after doing something difficult, and about the importance

of physical support. A disillusioned Egyptian shared that for the first time he believed there were Israelis working for peace.

I offer this anecdote not as an ideal, but rather as a re-entry to a central question driving this book: in situations of violent and seemingly intractable conflict between ethnonational groups, what can or ought theatrical facilitation offer? In this final chapter, I suggest four possible answers, each inflected by the facilitator's position relative to the conflict in question, and each re-engaging the keyterms framing this study around 'theatre', 'facilitation', and 'nation formation'.

Though there are intersections among the theories, methods, and practices, I separate them for the purpose of comparative assessment. Previous chapters have detailed some of the assumptions underlying theatrical approaches to intergroup and interpersonal encounters; this chapter pays particular attention to the position and practices of the facilitator—or Joker/difficultator in Boalian terminology. Analysis centers on theatrical facilitation as practiced by three individuals with whom I have worked most closely, Scot McElvany, Chen Alon, and Wesley Days, and one who I have met more recently, Juliano Mer Khamis. Each of these individuals embodies a particular positional relationship to their work as insiders/outsideers to the population and conflict engaged. Each also draws on a different scheme of intervention, and a distinct performance practice, to transform the conflict scenario and develop civic consciousness and agency among the youth with whom they mainly work.

I begin by briefly re-viewing through the lens of facilitation my community-based theatre practice with Scot McElvany in the Balkans and Berlin (detailed in Chapters 2 and 3). Our work together as relative outsideers focused on generating safe spaces for difficult discussions, and directing collaborative theatre in site-specific locations that animated civic space through performance. I then assess performance-based facilitation practices with Palestinian and Israeli youth. I first detail Chen Alon's expansion of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), adapted to engage intergroup encounters. Alon combines adaptations of TO with insights from group therapy, working together with Israelis and Palestinians to achieve 'critical equal participation' and Levinasian regard-for-the-other.² Within a polarized context, Alon operates as a Boalian Joker, generating structures for representing the past, remodeling the present, and transforming the future. I then introduce a counter-example of theatrical separation in the West Bank city of Jenin. Juliano Mer Khamis works with Palestinians only, directing scripted theatre and teaching circus and clowning skills to creatively

reframe their struggle. I conclude with the performative disorientations structured by Wesley Days, another Seeds of Peace facilitator. Days takes on multiple roles within a ritual-based performance praxis to defamiliarize and reimagine group identifications. While all four facilitators work within a Freirian model of elicitation, within this framework they respectively guide representation, joker critical reflection, (re)direct cultural capacity, and disorient received understandings. Within situations of divisive and violent conflict, theatrical facilitations rebuilt community, enabled polarized groups to re-encounter each other, strengthened the identity of a discrete oppressed group, and expanded limiting group identifications.

Building bridges in the Balkans

I'd like to return for a moment to the detour in the woods. Though not a theatrical facilitation, the embodied scenario resonates with the community-based practices I enacted with Scot McElvany in the Balkans. As outsiders to the conflict, we too made mistakes, but also built trust among individuals to generate temporary spaces of ethical community through performance, using embodied experience to foster relationships and elicit reflections. However, we worked more specifically with collaboratively created theatre, particularly with youth in Mostar, generating stories that membered this city differently. Together with participating youth, we animated alternative spatialities that produced a different set of social relations in a newly divided city among redefined ethnoreligious groups. In a site where physical violence was sometimes problematically remembered but receding, our praxis activated civic space to tell stories counter to those generated by city authorities, and to forge youth networks within the city and throughout the Balkans.

To generate the material for *Poštár* (discussed in Chapter 2) Scot began meeting with youth from Mladi Most several months before I returned to Mostar. He knew from conversations following *Podrum* that the youth wanted to keep meeting together through theatre, to tell a different story about their city, and to do so through character-based drama as well as imagistic metaphors. Initial meetings generated material through poetry exercises prompted by such questions as 'what is this city?' McElvany guided the youth through a writing brainstorm, inviting them to think historically and experientially, and to juxtapose those images. Through this and other exercises, participants began to see themselves as connected to rather than detached from, and targeted by, historical events.

One of the generative poems produced in this exercise later opened *Poštar*, introducing 'The City' as a space that encompassed 'poets, writers, painters, jokers, ordinary people... Austro-Hungarian and Turkish cultures, East and West.' The poem (translated here from Bosnian) also reflected conversations about civic responsibility elicited through Boal-based image work oriented towards envisioning the city's future: 'The young people have a great responsibility now / Whether we'll make a better future in this city for our children depends on us.' When I arrived in the summer, we generated more personal material and developed archetypal characters within Mostar. These activities continued the process of realigning individual experience with social imaginaries in order to envision the world as transformable rather than static, in Freire's terms.

We first asked the youth to bring in their favorite line from a letter that they had sent or received during the war. We then socially resituated these personal moments inviting the ensemble to respond to the letters through images. Hajdi's letter from an actress she had met in the Bosnian Serb Republic sparked images of political separation and momentary connection. The youth created a linked wall through which Hajdi and Sanela struggled to grasp hands (Figure 2.4). As they touched, the wall broke briefly apart. In developing the scene for *Poštar*, we invited the youth to add lines from the letter to their dynamized image. In the final performance, after sharing these lines, the wall snapped back into place as the two young women backed away from each other, eyes locked. The theatricalized scenario strove to animate the relationship between individual and political separations.

The focus on creative collaboration – on theatrical material developed through elicitation, conversation, and reflection – placed less emphasis on ethnoreligious difference and more on generating relationships and rehearsing new narratives. While no quantitative evidence of long-term impact exists, I often hear from youth with whom we worked. A consistent thread within these messages references ongoing relationships and projects. Djeka speaks of 'workshops with young people using what we learned from you' and Jasna writes of working together with workshop participants on several projects in Vojvodina. Bojana in Berlin offers a counter-example of a project without theatre where school groups meet but don't build new relationships. But more than scattered testimonials and individual relationships, later projects linked with local organizations to produce wider youth networks within and outside of the Balkans, particularly in relation to Europe.

For the most part, these projects avoided analysis of intergroup dynamics. As US facilitators with lived experience in the Balkans and

in Germany, we negotiated our positions as informed outsiders, trying to resist creating performances that posited a particular understanding of 'the Balkans'. We worked instead to create spaces through theatre where Balkan youth could themselves engage these understandings, in dialogue with each other and with limiting ethnonational narratives and European frames, thus activating for themselves a sense of civic agency that had been largely submerged or directed towards separation and conflict during the Balkan Wars.

Confronting borders in the Middle East

Between-the-Lines staged a multiplicity of Balkan identities, often positioned in relation to a European 'center' and countering an ahistorical myth of continuous conflict. The Berlin installation and our community-based theatre projects took place at increasing temporal and spatial distances from the Balkan Wars. In contrast, theatrical facilitations in Israel and Palestine had to contend with ongoing situational and structural violence, framed within a practice of separation, a dynamic of asymmetrical control, and a set of narrative rationalizations for both. Within this framework, Chen Alon adapted a set of Boal-based Theatre of the Oppressed techniques to draw attention to intergroup polarizations between Jewish Israelis and Arab Palestinians. Rather than forming a temporary 'utopian' community, forged from shared affect and the generation of collectively told stories, Alon worked with various Palestinian partners to create spaces of ethical encounters that did not attempt to deny the alterity of the Other. Rather than operating as a guide external to the conflict, Alon and his partners produced and reflect the dynamics of that conflict from within, particularly around the generation of difference and performances of power. And rather than generating a unified performance, Alon and his partners joked destabilizing encounters.

Critical equal participation

In the previous chapter, in dialogue with Alon, I suggested that the most effective theatrical encounters in the Middle East are long-term, alliance-based, and movement-oriented. I also note that Alon believes Boal's focus on homogenous oppressed groups misses an opportunity to transform oppressors into allies. In order to illustrate how this belief manifests in action, I focus here on a 'typical workshop' exposing and exploring polarized differences. In this typical workshop, Alon facilitates face-to-face encounters through a modification of Boal's image theatre exercises.

A series of introductory games demechanizes the body, opens creativity, develops a theatrical vocabulary, and initiates more trusting encounters within the group. The games also serve as metaphors for intergroup and intragroup dynamics. Alon often begins by bringing the group together in a circle, stretching each other by alternately leaning forward and backward, using physical tensions to generate balance in the group. He then instructs participants to walk through the center point of this circle to a location on the other side. When chaos and crowding inevitably ensues as a by-product of individual decision-making, he invites them to cross again, first asking them to consider what happened, why, and what they might now do differently. He does not ask for discussion or physically redirect the group's movements; the questions instead invite internal reflections that might transform the situation through action. 'It's like an introduction to individual versus group strategy', explains Alon. 'What can I do as an individual that will be safe for me but still contribute to the group's common mission' (2008c). It is a mode of joking that is *maieutic*, eliciting changes in tactics from the youth rather than imposing or directing these changes.

In other introductory activities, Alon introduces competition and cooperation: partners clasp hands and try to step on each others' toes, small knotted groups work in silence to disentangle themselves. After these activities he offers observations and probing questions that begin to invite comments from participants. He avoids lengthy discussions, always moving the group back into action. After partnering or small-group activities, he often instructs participants to walk around the room and get into groups of two, four, five, and eight. He then asks them to reflect silently on what happened to those left out of larger-numbered groups. In the early part of a workshop session Alon often develops basic image work, inviting participants to create sculptures of home, friends, parents, various emotions, and then experiences of oppressions. Discussion here is minimized as participants learn to communicate in embodied ways. A focus on physical work also reduces language differences among participants (though instructions are provided in both Arabic and Hebrew).

After warming up physically and theatrically and introducing activities that begin to emphasize ingroup/outgroup relationships, a second series of exercises focuses on divisions. Alon asks the group to split in two, then creates minimal oppositional groups through several competitive games and exercises. The core of the workshop then focuses on the animation of polarizing difference and the creation of aesthetic spaces in which each half of the group serves as witnesses and stimulation for

the other, with the make-up of those two 'halves' constantly shifting, a structure initiated by Israeli community theatre artist Peter Harris in work with prisoners and students.

Alon carefully jokers the next exercise developed under Harris's guidance. He marks a bold line in the room with colored masking tape, crosses it, and asks that others join if they feel hailed by the topic introduced, beginning with the phrase, 'Who, like me...'. He generally begins with lighter topics focused on surface identity such as: 'Who, like me, is wearing jeans.' He then invites participants to introduce their own topics, and to gradually deepen the conversation so that it relates to the conflict in the room. This is accomplished again without directed pressure but with questions that continue to open possibilities and relay doubts that foreclose easy comfort. 'Is there something that hasn't been said?' 'What is it that hasn't been named?' Eventually someone takes a greater risk. 'Who, like me, has been discriminated against because of where they are from'; 'Who, like me, has served in the army'; 'Who, like me, has had people we know killed by violence.'

Alon offers seemingly objective reflections about the number and posture of bodies that cross the line, often framed as questions. 'What does it feel like to be the only one across the line?'; 'What is your experience witnessing that individual?'; 'See how they are standing closer to each other on the question about violence. Why do you think this is different?' Alon asks the group not to verbally respond to the questions, but to take them in and let them resonate. Occasionally he invites the group who has crossed the line or those who stayed behind to respond to topics with images, to express the resonance of the exercises and the questions it provokes, and then for the 'opposing' group to respond to those images that resonate with them. Through this process Alon cumulatively raises the attention, commitment, and awareness of participants: from making a choice to cross a line, to considering how they are positioned in relation to others in the room, to translating those reflections into more deeply embodied responses. He deepens their choices, renders them more difficult, inviting ongoing propositions from the youth themselves that continuously redivide the room.

The exercise fractures the group, embodying the multiplicity of differences among them, while encouraging individuals to take responsibility for where they stand. Participants sometimes make choices to embody what Boal would term 'sym-pathetic' relationships with someone who may be from the 'other' side. The activity's structure allows for the ongoing processing of topics through spatial positioning and images. Through continuous face-to-face encounters, joked questions,

comments, and resonant silences, participants become aware of what it means to speak with their bodies and to be alternately 'onstage' and witnessing. Through the Joker's observations and questions, they begin to be able to read patterns in the room themselves, to become theorists of the group dynamics.

Finally, the group selects a topic that has polarized them in approximately equal halves. With Palestinian and Israeli participants, the topic tends to be conflict-related. Each group then stands facing the other and Alon asks them to repeat the phrase 'You are looking at us and we are looking at you' several times, with varying moments of silence between the repetitions, to allow the polarization to resonate. Then, Alon invites each group to gather together and write a list of what they felt when the other was looking at them, and what they believe the other group thought of them. This process helps to recode the deep and primarily wordless experience they have just been through, and to expand thinking beyond individual experience to imagine as a group the perspective of the other towards themselves. The lists are quickly translated if necessary, and each group then exchanges papers, staging an image in response to what they read in the other group's thoughts, again deepening the relational encounter. Alon jokers the images, encouraging contact among individuals, and the refinement of expressive features. Finally, Alon invites the group to reflect on what has emerged for them through the experience. These reflections are often lengthy and emotional, revealing a heightened awareness and consciousness of the relationship of self to Other.

The polarized process expands on Boal's theories and practices by working with the theatrical present rather than with scenarios from the past to transform the future. The process also echoes Martin Buber's philosophical reflections on how perceptions of the other haunt social relations and diminish possibilities for what he terms 'genuine dialogue' (1992 [1965]: 73–4). Making those perceptions visible prompts a step towards more authentic encounter. The polarized process thus adds a dialogic dimension to Theatre of the Oppressed, allowing for what Alon terms 'critical equal participation' and what I would term an activated sense of citizenship.

In the second binational encounter between youth from Yeruham and El Khader, for example, Alon joked a version of Boal's 'Columbian Hypnosis' exercise (2002: 51–5). In this silent activity, partners lead each other with a hand placed a few inches from the follower's face. The leader and the follower share responsibility for keeping the distance and orientation between the follower's face and the leader's palm

constant. Pairings of Israeli and Palestinian youth lead each other, at first separately then mutually – each partner holding up a hand and acting as both leader and follower at once. The group then chose one individual to lead all the rest in a tiered series – the primary leader first guiding two others with both of her hands. Each of these two then held out their hands to lead four others, who in turn led eight others. Small movements from the ‘top’ leader magnified as they rippled down the lines. A twitch of the hand was increasingly amplified, leading to drastic changes in position for those at the ‘bottom’, most of whom ended up close to the floor, dragged around with little conscientiousness by those in the middle tiers concentrating on following their leader’s hand.

After he joked this exercise, Alon invited the youth to share any observations, then encouraged them to reflect on how their experiences might reflect relationships outside of the room. They spoke of the role and responsibility of their political leaders and also their own role as citizens. According to Alon, the youth concluded together that their political leaders had little interest in transforming the conflict and that they, as citizens, had to take up this responsibility. ‘They experienced in their bodies the power relations in the room and understood that this echoed relations outside. They concluded that they might transform their relations in the room, and then in the state, in the world’ (2008a). Alon operates here as both *maieutic* guide and reflector, eliciting from the youth how their felt experience echoed more abstracted political power relations in order to increase their capacity to act as transformative agents. He emphasizes that a specifically theatrical facilitation generates this cycle of embodying, reflecting, and acting (2008c).

For the participants, coming to realizations about the political process together did not immediately alter the dynamics outside of the room. In fact, in reflections at the end of this session, the El Khader youth were quick to remind the Israelis of the constraints on their mobility, the difficulties they had traveling to meet with them. But *within* the room, according to Alon, the youth experienced equal participation to mutually acknowledge external differences related to political power.

In the Viewpoints work with youth, narration of the conflict occurred *with* rather than *of* another. By encountering the other directly, he or she emerges as what Levinas refers to as a non-conceptual object, exceeding the confines of ‘understanding’ (1998: 5). To ‘understand’ is for Levinas a negative act of objectification. But to look straight at the other, not on the ‘horizon of his being’ but in the face, brings one into response-ability and a more direct ethical relationship with the other

(5). This acceptance allows for disagreement, but the other is always affirmed as a person.

Alon asserts that equal participation on critical issues of naming power differentials is a step towards generating the alliances in longer-term organizations like the Viewpoints company or Combatants for Peace. Yet there are clear limitations to that alliance-building, particularly around facilitation training. Alon acknowledges that for the Palestinian facilitators in the Viewpoints encounter project, untrained in TO techniques, the process was sometimes 'the opposite of empowering.' He explains, 'We were dealing with the fact that the Israelis have more experience and training, more access to educational resources. We must break these infrastructural inequalities (2008a).

Alon's work frames conflict transformation in terms of critical partnership that develops the full humanity of both 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' in the Israeli/Palestinian context, while acting to transform the oppressive dynamics of that conflict. In his facilitation praxis, polarization operates as a structural modality that recognizes the oppositional nature of nation formation for Palestinians and Israelis. The facilitation praxis tries to reframe those oppositional energies towards a critical alliance that strives to undo the occupation, particularly the asymmetrical control of resources, territory, and movement. He acknowledges the dilemma of trying to develop a more just future vision of equitable partnership when unequal training resources mirror the conflict dynamics, thus potentially reproducing rather than dismantling existing power relations.

A Palestinian-identified theatre artist may offer a way out of this dilemma through an alternative, and perhaps complementary theatrical praxis, one uninterested in any kind of partnership. Unlike Alon – whom he has met and admires for his political work with Combatants for Peace – Juliano Mer Khamis does not believe in encounter-based theatre as a tactic for transforming the conflict scenario. He advocates working separately with Palestinian youth, offering opportunities in classes such as acting, clowning, storytelling, and psychodrama to develop their full existential capacity in the face of both Israeli occupation and internal Palestinian cultural constraints. It is part of what he calls 'the third intifada' of culture (2008a) after the first 1987 popular uprising of the Palestinian people and the second more directed and violent resistance initiated in 2000. Though Mer Khamis has never worked directly with Theatre of the Oppressed techniques or with facilitated models of group encounter, he articulates a clear and convincing artistic philosophy resonant with a positive praxis of political resistance, based on

years of experience as both an artist and activist. He does so under the banner of the 'Freedom' Theatre; a moniker indexing a key difference from the four case studies discussed in Chapter 4 – Seeds of Peace, School for Peace, Viewpoints (sponsored by the Peres Center for Peace), and Combatants for Peace. While each of these organizations differentially deploys the terms of 'peace', Mer Khamis's theatre foregrounds the principle of liberation.

A separate development at the Freedom Theatre of Jenin

In the midst of a densely packed concrete city pockmarked with rocky rubble, a red-wigged, yellow-jacketed clown appears riding on a scooter. He stands on the seat and waves at passersby who enthusiastically wave back. They grasp at his hands and he pats them on the back; there is clear delight in all of the exchanges. The clown then marches a line of children two-by-two into a roomy theatre space, where they sit giggling in anticipation of the reopening of the Freedom Theatre of Jenin.

This short video, a 'Virtual Tour', frames the theatre's renewal following its destruction by Israeli forces in the 2002 invasion of Jenin, a refugee camp and city in the West Bank. The appearance of the clown follows a nighttime shot of Israeli tanks rumbling through the camp. The juxtaposition of images suggests how theatrical play might operate as a mode of more positive national formation within a strategy of political resistance. Juliano Mer Khamis, who espouses this philosophy, spearheaded the rebuilding of the theatre where he had previously worked in the late 1980s with his mother, Arna, a Jewish Israeli educator and radical activist who had married a Palestinian.³ Mer Khamis – a well-known actor and director in Israel – had shot video footage of the youth performers. He returned to Jenin after the second intifada to try to discover what had happened to the youth, an experience documented in his film *Arna's Children* (2004). In the film, Mer Khamis reveals that several of the youth had been injured, killed, and/or radicalized as a result of the Israeli occupation. IDF soldiers had shot some. One had killed himself (and others) in a suicide attack in Israel. Impacted by these stories, and by worldwide response to the documentary, Mer Khamis felt a responsibility to return to Jenin. He rebuilt the theatre to 'give voice to the children' (Freedom Theatre, 2008). They were, according to Mer Khamis, hungry for this, much like the youth in the Varaždin refugee camp in Croatia. described in Chapters 1 and 2. 'We don't want this life', asserts a Palestinian mother in a recent Freedom Theatre video, 'where every child is filled with rage' (Mer Khamis, 2008b).

Like McElvany and myself, Mer Khamis specifically aims to provide youth with a safe space through theatre. In that space the often traumatized Palestinian youth are free to express themselves in their own language. Younger children work with trained psychotherapists using methods similar to those Mer Khamis employed in the early 1990s and documented in *Arna's Children*. The film features a sequence in which Arna invites a young Palestinian boy, whose house has been recently destroyed by the Israeli army, to express his anger through role play, figuring herself as the army. The youth lightly strikes at her, laughing, while she speaks of the value of expressing and creatively redirecting emotions such as anger. Thus, immediately after this playful physical outburst, Arna guides them in drawing. Soon afterwards we see Mer Khamis leading another group, who role play a scene from their English class. He and other acting teachers featured in archives of the theatre operate as supportive coaches, redirecting frustrations into allegorical tales with political resonance (Cinderella is featured in the Virtual Tour) or amplifying young girls' voices through vocal training. They develop skills and confidence that will ideally empower the youth, according to the theatre's website, 'to challenge present realities'. The website is quite clear about naming those realities in terms of the Israeli occupation, including 'nightly incursions by the Israeli Army' that lead to 'cycles of violence and oppression'. Mer Khamis and the theatre's board members are equally clear about naming other constraints within Palestinian culture, while acknowledging that those constraints have themselves emerged under the pressure of Israeli occupation.

In a talk sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee in San Francisco, Freedom Theatre board president and Professor of Fine Arts, Dr Mervat Aiash, discussed internal Palestinian resistance to the theatre, based on traditional suspicions about artistic representation. She added that over the several years of its existence, the theatre had gradually overcome those internal suspicions by working with respected leaders within the Jenin community. She indicated that for the first time since the theatre's reopening, the most recent Freedom Theatre production had played to an audience composed largely of residents from the camp. While some parents still expressed anxieties about their children attending acting classes, according to Dr Aiash, the parents had begun to see results in improved schoolwork, as well as in the youths' contributions to community-building within the camp.

'During the workshops we bring out things that trouble us, things that cause us stress', one teenage girl shares in the Virtual Tour video. 'Here we can release our energy.' She adds that the theatre provides one

of few safe spaces for girls to gather in Jenin. That space is structured to allow for dissent. The girls argue passionately amongst themselves about their destiny, whether they will be actors, directors, or stuck in the kitchen. The boys in the video are equally lively and articulate, expressing a strong belief in the power of the theatre to transform themselves and their society. 'Before the theatre opened', one admits, 'I used to hang around the street.' Indeed, Dr Aiash notes that the theatre company originated from Arna Mer Khamis's work with street gangs. A current group in the theatre calls themselves the Bad Boys; they have recently closed a show about a mythic journey that they undertook, based on scenes developed from their lives. In the Virtual Tour, one of these boys speaks of his brother, the young actor from *Arna's Children* who had killed himself in a suicide attack. '[He] didn't have the chance to develop [his] talent; [he and his friends] were killed and became martyrs. I hope we will have the chance to develop our talent.' Another boy amplifies the thoughts of the first: 'All of us wished to become martyrs, but since the theatre opened, we feel that we have something to live for.' The youth see the theatre work as a form of cultural resistance against the occupation. It is a position that Mer Khamis underlines in discussing his ideas about a 'third intifada' of culture.

A third intifada

In his San Francisco talk (2008a), Mer Khamis contends that the next Palestinian battle must be *for* cultural values and against the kind of 'football-team' mentality of internal conflict between the Fatah and Hamas parties. The third intifada must be against nepotism and the ineptitude of the current political elite and *for* education and creative development. According to Mer Khamis, children aged 16–24 can become the new troops of this intifada. 'They are at an age where they are willing to sacrifice for their people, and that sacrifice can take the form of training in the arts. They will be armed with values. They will not become the mirror of their enemy [fighting with violence] but real freedom fighters.' This kind of cultural battle, according to Mer Khamis, must replace one in which all communication is framed by convincing the outside world that 'we don't have a tail, that we aren't all terrorists' (2008a).

Creative production becomes a mode of cultural empowerment, generating a positive and internally developed sense of identity rather than one composed only in oppositional relation to Israelis. The Freedom Theatre thus offers 'respite' from the occupation, but also a space to 'rearrange reality' (Freedom Theatre, 2008), a step towards generating an alternative cultural imaginary.

Mirror views

Mer Khamis seems to directly counter Alon's beliefs in alliance-based partnership. But I contend that both modes of theatrical praxis are necessary and complementary rather than contradictory. Both are working primarily with what they identify as their own culture to transform attitudes and beliefs about nation formation from within, while recognizing how that identity has been forged through the conflict dynamics. For Alon, an ethical Israeli identity must take responsibility for the dynamics of occupation, and work to transform the oppressive situation through political partnership. Refusing to serve in the IDF enacts an individual recognition of privilege and a concrete step towards transformative political alliance. For Mer Khamis – who left Israel and many of its associated privileges of citizenship – living in Jenin means working to develop a more positive iteration of Palestinian identity through theatre with a new generation of youth. Both work with a pedagogy of elicitation rather than imposition, guiding youth to develop their own sense of civic agency.

Both also work in different ways with the metaphor of a mirror to describe their praxis. For Alon, the polarized theatrical space productively reflects the external conflict. That space also offers the opportunity to create and actively transform images and scenarios of oppression as a rehearsal for more direct action – an arc most concretely manifested in *Combatants for Peace*. For Mer Khamis, the Israelis are the mirror that the Palestinians must avoid glaring into in order to develop a distinct and positive cultural identity. Though here too, the theatrical realm offers an alternative spatiality in which external reality can be reshaped through the imagination.

While Alon consciously adapts Theatre of the Oppressed techniques to a polarized process, the Freedom Theatre independently enacts the principles and practices underlying Theatre of the Oppressed to achieve popular liberation. These two modes of theatrical praxis – polarization that develops 'critical equal participation' and separation that builds cultural and political capacity – both potentially reframe the conflict scenario. They are not-quite mirror images of the other that rely on an inward reflection on nation formation as a step towards generating a more ethical social reality defined by participatory citizenship.

There are some limits to both modalities. Both approaches sustain an understanding of identity rooted in the nation form. And perhaps this is a necessary step towards undoing a situation of oppression from the inside: for Israelis to see the occupation as a contradiction of their ethical self-image and for the Palestinians to focus on more positively defining themselves. The first praxis requires encounter with and response to

the Other; the latter calls for separation. Perhaps both are paradoxically necessary and complementary steps towards transforming the conflict scenario from a binary oppositional framework.

Wesley Days offers yet another reflection; his performance-based facilitation holds up a different kind of mirror to the Seeds of Peace youth with whom he works. This mirror disorients their understanding of 'the Other', of themselves, and of the conflict scenario. In this praxis, the youth must continually adjust and perform in ways that challenge the concepts of their own identity.

Contingent joking

As an outsider to the Middle East and to the dominant culture within the United States, Wesley Days approaches his facilitation through means rooted less in the structural binaries that largely define Israeli/Palestinian relationships. He works more with poststructural practices within which identity operates as a flexible performance, though not detached from dynamics of power and oppression. As an African American, Days sees himself forging his work through a conscious process of what Diana Taylor references as transculturation, borrowing what one needs from a colonizing culture to forge new modes of expression (2003: 10). Through a 15-year journey that retraces the African diaspora and encompasses a variety of roles, amongst them – political officer and UN aid in East Africa, nomadic musician in Central and South America, and post-structural joker in the United States – Days has gathered knowledges grounded in the resistant practices of the colonized and enslaved. Yet, rather than only working with 'the oppressed' as Boal and Mer Khamis advocate, he sets up a container that allows participating youth from the Middle East and other regions to encounter each other in a variety of ways.

Days's tactics are adaptive and contingent. He does not work with fixed facilitation systems such as Theatre of the Oppressed, group process work, or drama therapy, but borrows from and morphs these and other structures. He asserts that this contingency draws on the survival strategies of being a Black American who has learned to read situations of power and shift identities accordingly. In *Methodology of the Oppressed* Chela Sandoval refers to the ability to nimbly engage in tactical rather than systemic practices as oppositional consciousness, which she locates genealogically in the experiences of women of color as 'tactics for negotiating hegemonic structures of meaning' (2000: 60). These negotiating skills combine in Days with training in music and capoeira (a martial art

form described below), a Master's degree in International Relations, and doctoral study in World Arts and Cultures to generate an adaptive and flexible mode of performance-based facilitation praxis. While he does not imagine himself as any kind of 'priest of transformation' or 'facilitation guru', Days's facilitation is also grounded in the Afro-Brazilian spiritual practice of *Candomblé* and its attendant Orixas – abstract energies of nature and ancestry that protect, heal, and inspire. The Orixas inform the arc of his facilitation sessions and the capoeira movements that help the Seeds of Peace youth to physically reframe conflict and encounter.

Unless asked, however, Days does not specifically articulate the spiritual background that informs his facilitation praxis with the Seeds of Peace youth. He is explicit about offering music, movement, and ritual as dynamic containers within which the energies of conflict might find alternative forms and understandings to 'open the way' for new thinking (Days, 2006). Alone and in partnership with others, he works with a variety of structures including drumming, capoeira, storytelling, image theatre, dialogue, and even woodland hikes. Within this framework, Days tries to dramaturg and respond to the experience of participants, to help them more productively engage with each other in the facilitation room and with the conflict scenario in their home region.

In the next sections I frame Days's practices through both the loose arc he describes when discussing his own facilitation, and in terms of the more rhizomatic way that each element informs the other. My intention here is not to be deliberately disorienting, but to try to give a sense of how these practices work relationally. I begin by summarizing Days's own dramaturgical frame, then describe some of the specific ways he structures the facilitation space through initial disorientations, building the group and training relational negotiations through capoeira, digging into the conflict scenario by defamiliarizing identity performatives, and creating environments that help Seeds reflect on their experience and how they might continue to learn from them. I conclude by reviewing these practices as a kind of joking that has its own limits.

Similar to how many flexible facilitators operate, whether Days chooses to work with various forms including capoeira, storytelling, image theatre, or dialogue depends on the energy he feels in the room. He also tries to shape that energy through an arc that includes opening or starting a process (manifested in the Exu Orixá), digging in (an Iron energy complemented by patience and precision), then heightening conflict in order to reflect on its dynamics (Fire energy),

before moving to closure and hopefully to wisdom. Specific interventions are informed by additional components of nurturing and tenderness.

This structure echoes similar descriptors of group process, evoked by such phrases as 'forming, norming, storming, and performing' or the extended fire analogy used by Fiona Macbeth and Nic Fine (1995) in their conflict resolution work with youth. However, Days defers total control over the structure, trying to be open to what the youth bring into the room. 'I go through a process of trying to be open, just knowing that when the time comes to make a decision... I'll make an intervention based on the moment' (2006). He does, however, begin initially with intentional disorientations.

Dis-orientations

We're back at the Seeds of Peace camp, out of the woods and into the trophy room, the space that Days transformed here with a partner in 2001 by sweeping out years worth of moldy old furniture, faded sports banners, and accumulated dust. Each summer since that time, returning Arab, Israeli, and a few South Asian and US Seeds of Peace campers, known as Peer Supports (PS), have gathered here for several hours a day. They play capoeira and piano, share and deconstruct mythic stories. They argue and sit in meditative or uncomfortable silences. They reflect deeply on what they do; they confront themselves and each other. In the summer of 2003, I sometimes worked with Days and two other facilitators, Andy Arsham and David Poplack, with what we called jazz facilitation, an improvisatory form drawing on Days's consistently contingent practices.

The first day of the first session of camp the 35 returning PSs are called into the space by Days's drumming and I help to guide them in a movement sequence. Music and movement work together to define pace, slowing to increase concentration and control, speeding up to introduce more chaotic energy. The youth walk on hands and feet to break natural habits. They grow more aware of each other negotiating the space. We then silently gather the group into a circle. Days steps out from behind the drums urging the PSs to create a more powerful form. They link hands and we test their strength pushing against the circle from outside and within. This, remarks Days, is not an essay contest like the one that may have landed them back at camp. They are here to test themselves against a different set of limits.

Days often begins his facilitation sessions without personal introductions or overviews of process. Avoiding introductions disorients,

but also operates as a political choice. Even this simple custom, he notes, demands that participants individuate themselves in ways they might not have chosen, particularly the Palestinians (2006). Yet, the youth are also not immediately separated into nation-based subgroups. They are instead thrown into a new structure that they must learn how to navigate as a group and as individuals. According to Days, Exu has opened the way for them to become more flexible agents within various conflict scenarios. Rather than guiding, the disorientation has taught the youth how to begin interpreting their own experiences.⁴ 'The disorientation begins with the dialogue structure', explains Days. 'They come to camp a second time expecting to argue their national narrative. Movement as dialogue does not provide them that satisfaction. They come to camp a second time expecting to outwit their enemy. They enter a room where other conflicts are also present. They must make continual adjustments' (2008a). Through these initiating disorientations, Days strengthens the youths' flexibility and independent thinking.

In the next session, the structure changes yet again.

This session occurs immediately after a flag-raising ceremony described in Chapter 1. In this ceremony, performed for a media audience, campers are grouped by country. They salute state flags, sing national songs, make speeches, and then leave behind their flags as symbols of their national attachments as they march back into camp arm-in-arm, all wearing the same green T-shirts and singing the Seeds of Peace anthem. This repeated ritual tends to provide a lot of fodder for the facilitation sessions that follow.

In our session Days orchestrates an alternative ceremony. First the PSs remove their shoes at the door to the Trophy Room, a ritual that had begun on the previous day. They step over the transom, and their energies are already transformed. Days now lines them silently into four equal rows and initiates a capoeira sequence, inviting the youth to mirror his movements as music plays in the background. His strict concentration and discipline invites their own, and the group becomes attuned to each other. Days concludes the sequence with the Mountain pose, a yoga stance within which concentration is at its most focused. After building them up, Days now tries to break the youths' concentration with sudden movements – stamping, handstands, confrontations just inches from their face – but they remain focused. They gather into a tight, strong circle, resisting any attempts to break through. Then a question is dropped into the group. 'Is the circle an artificial construction created by "Seeds of Peace"?'

A lengthy silence ensues.

Then the structure breaks.

The youth position themselves on an imagined map of the world and Days invites reflections on the various physical forms they have experienced to this point. 'This map is more artificial than the circle', one asserts. 'We are friends separated by distance until we arrive at the camp.' Days reminds them of their recent singing of their national songs and asks whether anyone had not sung their anthem. Several Israelis stand up, mostly Palestinian citizens of Israel, but also a few Jewish Israelis who indicate their discomfort singing a song that does not include everyone in their country. Days then asks those who had sung strong and proud to stand and share why. After first standing, then listening to others, several Israelis move to a crouching pose to indicate the shifts in their thinking. A Palestinian citizen of Israel calls out, 'I don't feel I belong anywhere.' A Jordanian speaks: 'We all want to belong somewhere.' Political and emotional divides, mixtures of shame and pride, now surface. 'It is easier to move together than to speak together', one PS reflects. When the youth make a circle again, the realities of difference remain between them in the space.

In these two sessions, Days has opened the way for new thinking that reflects and refracts identity and belonging. Individual and national identities are initially de-emphasized in a performance of unity expressed in the circle. A superordinate and supplementary 'Seeds of Peace' identity is conjured and almost immediately challenged as later sessions reintroduce subgroup national attachments. The need for these 'feelings of belonging' is expressed in the room rather than assumed or elided. The PSs also begin to respond to each other as Days both structures the space of encounter and remains at its margins, prompting the youth to name and interpret their own experiences.

Negotiations

After opening the way for new relational thinking through a series of disorientations, Days deepens the process. One of the structures he calls upon to do so is capoeira, a physical form and philosophy with spiritual connections to *Candomblé* that brings together music, movement, and ritual. As a game, a fight, and a dance, capoeira also operates as a metaphor for dialogue and encounter among the Seeds of Peace youth. Playing capoeira with various partners builds into the body the skills of awareness, flexibility, and oppositional consciousness. Movements require continuous response to partners and to the music played and sung by the community that surrounds them in a capoeira *roda* (hoh-dah).

Two players step out of the circle to begin the game, crouching face-to-face and clasping hands when they meet. They then initiate and respond to slow kicks, rolls, turns, and curving arm movements, working to maintain eye contact even when upside down. Led by Days, the music responds to and encourages different energies, provoking or reinforcing aggressive movements to let the 'conversation' or game build. Sometimes the partners dance palm to palm, but they are always seeking a way to destabilize the other. There is no 'winner', the game simply continues with another pairing while the former players pick up instruments in the *roda*. It is a 'conflict' form that teaches how to share time and space, a significant resource for the youth within their conflict scenario. The *roda* itself resignifies the facilitation circle. It is not simply a structured shape that implies equality, but rather a container of energy generated by those who create it. Those in the *roda* alternately function as players, interpreters, musicians, and witnesses to partnered encounters.

Days often calls together the *roda* through music. He initiates an opening song with the *berimbau*, a one-stringed standing bamboo and gourd instrument played in capoeira by an elder. Like the drummer in West African dance, the *berimbau* works in concert with the capoeiristas to structure the dynamics of play – a dynamic that is crucial to one genealogical reading of capoeira as a martial art created by Afro-Brazilian slaves to mask their resistance training.⁵ Having taught the Seeds of Peace youth several basic moves, Days invites them to select someone in the group with whom to 'have a conversation' through capoeira. The *roda* then interprets the game, further building the conversation before a new pairing enters the space. The interpretations are often remarkably astute, surfacing a variety of interpersonal and intercultural dynamics through a process of projection similar to that invoked by image theatre.

As in Boal's work, the youth in capoeira function as both spectators and performers, creators of text and its interpreters. The capoeira moves them beyond rational discourse about the conflict, to explore relationships in the group through movement. 'We have this space where we can communicate with ourselves and not just our mouths', Days challenges the PSs in one session taped for a documentary (*Seeds*, 2004). 'If you feel you can express to the group through your movements and not just your words, you can do that here.' The youth attest that it's a better way of discussion. It moves them beyond rehearsed argumentation, the grooves of the conflict that they know too well, towards a more flexible encounter that requires greater awareness of their 'opponent'. These

encounters also begin to call attention to the multiple power dynamics that structure identity.

Performatives

Boalian theorist and practitioner Mady Schutzman asserts that the *curinga* or Joker keeps everyone aware of their performativity, of their citational behaviors. 'One promise of jokers as pedagogues, as leaders, is that they do not let us forget that we are a composite of characters, ideals, and fantasies, of complex emotions about ourselves and the world around us, including our apparent enemies' (2006: 144). The *curinga* possesses a deep understanding of social performance and cultural scripts, knowing when and how to surface these scripts in order to figure them as potentially transformable. One way that Days does so is by encouraging the youth to be conscious of the social roles that they play in a group. He encourages them to consider when they speak not as individuals, but through what Arnie Mindell in his group process work refers to as 'ghost voices' who need to be conjured into the space.

In one session following a capoeira dialogue, a young Palestinian Israeli woman cautioned a young man about interpreting her behavior in the facilitation room as personality-based. 'Your knowledge about me is limited to what I say in a group', she explained, 'sometimes I reflect other people's thoughts that they don't have the courage to express. You don't know me personally' (*Seeds*, 2004).

During the same session, the youth reflected on the roles that two resistant Palestinians might be playing in refusing to sign a document that other members of the group had written, urging respect for opposing cultural narratives. Over the course of several weeks of training, the youth had become more astute interpreters of their own conflicts, reading beyond interpersonal relationships back to the regional scenario. An Israeli male thus commented, 'Both of [the Palestinians] represent the people in the region that are not willing to listen, that are holding their emotions and thoughts and not willing to express or open or say what they think. I think for myself that I won't feel complete as a group because I am not willing to give up on these people.' He and others proposed that the Palestinians were taking on a necessary role, holding out for a truth in the group that challenged the temporary formation of a new community – an artificial circle. The Israeli PS expressed his understanding of the situation as one that required the other, but also required accepting the equity and alterity of the other. 'We're not here to be fully understood and not here to have someone tell me "I know exactly what you are talking about." If I fully understood [a Palestinian

Israeli member of the group] I would lose something of myself' (*Seeds*, 2004).

The young PS evokes the limits of understanding that define the relationship of the self to the other. Levinas describes this confrontation as a relational ethic defined by difference rather than sameness. He suggests that this encounter with the other is a crucial aspect of the development of the ethical self (1998, 2005). Days adds to this proposition noting, 'In facilitation, relationships are formed when the needs of the self can be greater satisfied by the presence of a complementary force – someone who agrees with your position or opposes it' (2006). Conflict is not banished from the room, but rather engaged through a variety of structures that disrupt the basic 'scripts' of identity and difference. Days deploys spatial polarizations, competitive games, and questions that introduce dynamics of difference and oppression around gender, class, and sexuality. He deliberately ruptures unified feelings to prompt the youth to continue exploring and deconstructing their citational behaviors and scripted responses, to unearth the knowledge systems that produce and sustain those responses. He does so in order to prepare them for return to more structured spaces of belief and behavior.

Liminalities

Along with music, movement, and various spatial structures of relational formation and deconstruction, the ritual space creates what Days refers to as the 'software' for alternative possibilities necessary for a return to the conflict region. He describes this return journey through Victor Turner, evoking the camp as an in-between or liminal space. 'You go into that liminal space [of camp] you have to come out of it.' But in order to really reprogram the software, the individuals must go through a process that breaks down the system that keeps them in a relationship of conflict. 'The only way they will come to a new system', suggests Days, 'is by pushing them to their extremes. They are not breaking down barriers when they are in the camp dining hall. You have to take them through another process. Removing the familiar and the routine so much that you push them to the discomfort zone, so that they have to rely on each other' (2006).

One way of generating those new systems occurred through an Outdoor Leadership Program begun in 2002. The Peer Supports left the contained space of the camp for several days to trek through the Maine woods, sometimes in gender-separated groups, sometimes all together. Days used the opportunity to push limits and open new conversations. On one lengthy hike up a mountain with the PS boys, Days and another

facilitator raced ahead and hid so that they could ‘capture’ the last youth in line. The group responded by creating a buddy system, and finding ways to guard the slower members. Days had shifted his position yet again, acting as an oppositional provocateur to generate a new sense of reliance in the group.

This process of rupture and restructuring relationships from conflict to cooperation echoes the findings of the Robber’s Cave experiment (Sherif et al., 1961 [1954]) and the Seeds of Peace Color Games both discussed in Chapter 1. But Days’s practices work through more than superordinate objectives. In addition to creating containers that open the way for new relations and ways of knowing, Days productively disorients the participants, obscuring ‘easy answers’ and ‘destabilizing fixed identities’ (Schutzman, 2006: 134). After the hike, Days and other male facilitators again challenged the boys when they tried to strengthen their internal connections through comparisons with the ‘weaker’ female PSs. They pushed the boys to reflect on the origin and necessity for their comparative evaluations and to see the link between this and other ingroup/outgroup constructions; in Mady Schutzman’s words, they ‘surfaced social scripts’ as a step towards their transformation.

Challenges that surfaced and rewrote those social scripts continued throughout the three-week camp session through an anti-systemic set of tactical operations. Days describes his practices as consciously post-structural:

[Some facilitators] will come into a process with a set idea – you know ‘an Arab Israeli’s going to be in the middle and that’s the game. Generally the [kids] are going to move on a chessboard like this, and this piece is going to move here.’ But it doesn’t work that way. Just bringing the youth out of the situation you’ve morphed it. You have to accommodate for new positionalities because they’re no longer [physically] separated from each other.

(2006)

Facilitation that relies upon a reading of individuals as playing out static group roles requires one to assume stability in the system. Yet, structured assumptions about those group roles may in fact sustain the system. *Candomble*, capoeira, and *curinga* facilitation provide ways of knowing and being that allow for the movement of relational energies from positionality and stuckness to openness, encouraging the SOP youth to transform *themselves* and the way they see and relate to others. Contingent interventions adopt and adapt a diverse set of facilitation

practices that try to work against rational negotiation. Because, asserts Days, it is this system of rationality that arguably organized conflict into being in the first place. For it's not the tactics, the interventions, or the exercises themselves that engage in conflict transformation, but the principle of disorientation and openness that will, according to Days, change the energy of the conflict through the process stirred up in the participants.

This disorienting principle also operates in relation to what Days describes as the camp's 'anti-modernist' position. On the grounds of Camp Powhatan, the Seeds of Peace experience replicates vestiges of 'playing Indian', a process Philip Deloria describes as appropriating the 'primitive authentic' in order to become a 'better modern' (1998: 102). According to Days, the staff and counselors at Seeds attempt to pass on an 'enlightened one-world' view 'using a setting and aesthetic (primitive authentic) that ideally generates a "better" (modern) world' (2008c). While noble in its vision, Days feels that this utopic and westernized position neglects to confront the realities of unequal global flows of resources and labor that ultimately sustain conflicts (and the camp itself). He tries to demonstrate this reality to the PSs experientially.

Joking

Lest the youth Days works with depart with exaggerated notions of the permanence of their transformation or with too simplistic 'one-world' viewpoints, he often introduces structures that remind them of how deeply entrenched they are in their conflict scenarios. On the last day of one of our sessions together in 2003 Days presented the PSs with *Quilombo*, meaning 'small groups', but also referencing an area in Brazil where runaway slaves formed their own free societies. He split the PSs into four groups and invited them to 'communicate with each other in the center of the room'. With no other instructions, offers of gifts – cushions, shoes, scarves – soon escalated into conflict when Days's group captured a member from another group. By the end of an hour the PSs were divided into two larger groups, one inside the Trophy Room and one outside, organized around mentalities of possession and siege. One of the Seeds outside with me suggested that we 'burn down the Trophy Room'. Those inside simply tried to hold the space.

At the end of the session, Days drew the group back together inside for a final reflective circle. Debriefs centered on the surprising (to the youth) mob mentality that had reigned and on the minimal resistance to this mentality. Few voices of 'peace' had emerged within a structure defined by aggressive competition. Just as on the mountain hike, weaker

individuals were soon lost in the game, but no strategy of protection emerged in the chaos of *Quilombo*. The PSs proposed that perhaps the state provides some structures that protect against the chaos they had experienced, while also maintaining the energies of external conflict. The group concluded their final session with the experiential knowledge that the rhetoric of 'peace' must be countered with an instinct for conflict and competition. Their struggles to transform the regional conflict scenario had to begin and continue with themselves.

Days does not advocate a prescriptive system that works towards a particular imagined future, but instead a disorienting structure that provides experiential insights into the possibilities and limits of conflict transformation. It's a structure that moves beyond a binary model of competing national narratives towards what Homi Bhabha refers to in *the Location of Culture* as a 'performative' and 'enunciatory present' (1994: 4), destabilizing the binaries that unthinkingly reproduce power relations. This facilitation praxis works through continual repositioning of the Seeds of Peace youth as well as Days himself. Days operates as a disorienting guide, a disciplinary and collaborative instructor, a post-structural theorist and pattern detector foregrounding identity performatives, a generator of conflicts eliciting reflective insights, a woodland trickster producing new group formations, and an initiator of actions with no guaranteed outcomes – a *curinga* joker whose seeming multiplicity and deliberate contingency are unified by how they refract the shape-shifting energies of the Orixas who dramaturgically guide his practice. Days also works through the differential consciousness articulated by Chela Sandoval, teaching the Seeds of Peace youth how to read, respond, and potentially transform the multiple relationships of power that they inhabit rather than to naïvely prepare for a utopic future vision. Days's facilitation praxis works to expose and denaturalize ideology, breaking down socially scripted narratives in order to generate what Sandoval refers to as a 'new kind of repoliticized citizen-warrior' (2000: 181). His work with youth produces not simply new 'social scripts' but new modes of encounter grounded in strength and flexibility.

Of course, like characters in a fairy tale or Shakespearean comedy, the youth must come out of the woods. They leave the realm where T-shirts, common rituals, and disorienting encounters have united them, allowing investigations of the differences amongst them. They leave with the potential for a 'citizen-warrior' consciousness produced through experiences of counter-structural sociality (*communitas*) and role-driven socialization (*societas*). Each modality makes coexistence possible, yet

'counter-structural' sociality is paradoxically produced through facilitated structures.⁶ It remains difficult for the Seeds youth to sustain relationships of equivalency and the expanded ingroup identity of a 'Seed of Peace' when they re-enter socialized spaces sustaining oppositional relationships. Though they are productively disoriented towards those structuring spaces, and become better interpreters of their own conflicts, they don't always have an alternative metaphysics to continue guiding them.

Days suggests that they don't necessarily need one and that the struggle towards finding their own way opens new possibilities for creatively altering the conflict scenario. It does so by resituating the youth as performative individuals, connected by a set of common experiences – which may or may not translate those experiences into everyday actions or political mobilizations. They have learned to confront the realities of aggressive competition as a force they must transform, beginning with themselves. And as in each method detailed here, the youth have embodied, felt, rehearsed, and performed new ways of being and being together, generating the possibility for networks of ongoing ethical relations rather than more stable ethnic attachments.

Between the Lines

I detail these four snapshots of theatrical facilitation not to propose some sort of progression towards the 'best' praxis, but to locate each method's situational effectiveness. Ultimately, there is no one 'theatrical facilitation manual' that will transform any conflict scenario, but a variety of articulated practices the most effective of which emerge from clear agendas with conscious theoretical underpinnings respondent to changing circumstances. Effective intervention in structures of oppositional violence requires not simply methods but a point of view that recognizes what is needed (or not needed) and when: when to build (McElvany), divide (Alon), separate (Mer Khamis), or disorient (Days) – from the margins or in the midst.

The practices detailed here also re-view and resituate relationships between theatrical facilitation and nation formation. Each method draws attention to how 'theatre' can be differentially deployed to generate affective attachments, create alternative narratives and spatialities, and fire the imagination in order to activate civic engagement as a reflective *practice* rather than only as a social *feeling*. For the Balkan youth with whom I worked with Scot McElvany, this practice generates connections across perceived borders through projects that reanimate civic space. For Alon, theatre models a relational ethic of new belonging.

'Theatre puts the self on stage', he comments, 'creating a group as a leadership model in various communities' (2008c). In Jenin, theatre generates a communal culture grounded in imagined visions rather than oppositional identities. In each of these sites, participants feel part of something that advances the realization of a more just future world. Wesley Days, in contrast, avoids the rhetoric of utopic visions, instead promoting reflexive and relational performatives that refuse the consolation of stable national attachments while guiding youth to denaturalize their attraction to, and citation of, group formations.

In each of these cases, theatre and theatricality function as alternatives to national attachment by deploying similar tactics – myth, symbol, narrative, emotion – but making these tactics more conscious through interactive play, thus promoting more flexible thinking and directed civic action. The 'theatre' is wrenched from its familiar context in an identifiable building, one that carries with it habits of attendance, viewing, and participation. In Mostar, work outside of the theatres arose out of choice and necessity: the buildings had been destroyed so theatre had to re-emerge in a different context. In Alon's and Days's practice, theatre mainly functions as a mediating structure, occurring in places that serve as reminders of differential mobility or as sites of the 'neutral primitive' in the Maine woods. The only building referenced in this study, the Freedom Theatre, stands as a deliberately 'professional' construction, a sign of resilience in a refugee camp under attack from without and neglect from within.

Though most theatrical facilitations cited here occur outside of theatre buildings, they are not outside of imaginative aesthetic practices. In the Balkans, Berlin, Israel, and Palestine, complex characterizations, interactive performance, and playful humor engaged a variety of relevant audiences while rendering the operations of ideology more transparent and contestable. Yet, in facilitation, theatre operates not only as a performance but also as a practice that must be rehearsed in the long-term, as a movement or series of movements. This ongoing practice ideally transforms the conflict scenario without the presence of external facilitators.

Ethical facilitation requires making decisions about when and how to imagine and produce different futures or to refuse the consolation of detachment and forgetting. Knowing when to actively intervene and when to witness and amplify is perhaps the most vital ethic of theatrical facilitation and its documentation. Placing differential practices and voices next to each other may also allow for new understandings to emerge 'between the lines' or in contrasts and comparisons.⁷ The

summer after I worked on *Between the Lines*, I returned to Seeds of Peace. I was surprised to hear from one of the Israeli Peers Supports that he had attended the *Between the Lines* production in Berlin. In so many words, he noted that an understanding of the self can emerge via a detour of the other: 'I learned so much about our own conflict by seeing this performance.'

This understanding can also emerge through reflection and retelling. When I shared with Meša Begić (the Postman in *Poštár*) some writing about the shows in which he was involved, he responded, 'I am really happy that you're publishing this book of our journey together. It was so special period of my life. I was learning without knowing ...' (2008). It's a feeling that productively haunts me as I near the end of my writing a few miles from the Seeds of Peace camp; the sense that meaning often emerges after-the-fact.

Looking back

Throughout this book, I have invoked the idea of a journey to point towards my presence in ethnographic archiving, to locate where events take place, or to reiterate the politicized nature of space. Like many journeys, I conclude with a point of reflection on the terrain traveled and meditations on its significance. Looking back on close to 15 years of theatrical facilitations that I have witnessed and co-created I ponder once again the question of their value in transforming seemingly intractable conflicts.

Theatre per se does not, of course, transform conflict or dismantle group feeling. The qualities that move individuals and groups can be marshaled towards various ends.⁸ But I have proposed several ways that theatrical facilitation can generate more just and sustainable futures: through community-based interventions that remember differently, through tactics of display that reorient citizenship, and through a developmental arc of ethical encounters that move feeling and consciousness towards actions considered in ethical relation to an other. But I think the most powerful aspect of theatrical facilitation is resonant with the journey's viewpoint – as a space to reflect and reconstruct, a pausing point to consider what is seen and has been experienced. At this point, one asks in the presence of others, 'is this who I am and wish to be?'

The role of the facilitator is to create that space of witness, to elicit the deepest of reflections, and to do so in a way that demands considered action. Writing about these practices also requires assessing which

stories are told when and how, avoiding sentimental depictions of suffering, self-congratulatory dramaturgies of hope, or defeatist narratives of despair – each of which can shut down options or unwittingly perpetuate conflicts by turning specific situations into abstract and eternal ideas.

There remains in any narrative as well the ‘excess that can’t be assimilated’.⁹ Not everything that I have witnessed can be understood or explained. Can there be an explanation, an answer to Serpan, whose story was told in Chapter 2? Why did he lose his brother? I don’t know why. I cannot find the explanation that would answer him. Traveling through Mostar, Berlin, Jerusalem, and other spaces mapped out in this book, I saw the evidence of historiography: the ways that physical and symbolic violence gets written and rewritten onto the landscape through shattered and rebuilt buildings, walls coming up and breaking down, bridges destroyed and reconstructed, with various voids pasted over or illuminated. I witnessed mysteries I could not fully grasp. How do neighbors become enemies? If the possibility exists in them, does the possibility exist in me? Can cycles of violence be reversed, resources be more equitably distributed, can a people connect through participatory and alliance-based actions as well as feelings of attachment? I don’t fully know. But I believe that it is powerful to arrive at a form and forum to materialize these questions. Theatrical facilitations are vital not because of the answers provided, but because the questions enabled can enact our very being through the presence of others. And that enactment demands a responsibility to witness, to ally, to act, and to amplify. This kind of journey does not conclude; it must keep moving. Through structured encounters as well as everyday interactions.

Epilogue: Continuous Movement

May 2008: I am in Los Angeles visiting Wesley Days. Before his class on capoeira and facilitation, I wander through the University's campus where I discover yet another checkpoint scene. A Palestinian student coalition has set up this mobile scenario; it is, in my estimation, a crude and excessive representation. The 'guards' here bear their guns menacingly, waving them in the faces of submissive 'Palestinians', reiterating an extreme projection of the oppressor/oppressed narrative that limits transformation. Yet I find myself defending the image when a witnessing student contests it: 'That's not what happens. The soldiers don't hold their guns in your face like gangsters.' I get caught up in his provocation, the need to prove my own (limited) experiential knowledge. 'Yes, they do. Sometimes they do. I've been there.' And I have, but I have not seen anything like this image. I just combat his energy with a rebuttal. We argue back and forth, rooting our point of view in fragmented experiences and narrow ideology.

Then the checkpoint moves, and the student touches my arm, 'Let's keep talking. Let's move with them.' Our fight transforms into serious play, a game, a dance, and we become more flexible. We move through campus, in conversation and then in dialogue. I share what I know of Chen's story, how he discovered himself living a contradiction. The student speaks of the trials of his Iranian Jewish American family. Like me, he has not actually lived in Israel nor served in the IDF. We are proxies of an oppositional conflict, beginning our unfacilitated encounter by holding the ghost roles of The Israelis and The Palestinians as imagined opponents. But we keep moving. He confesses that he is in favor of ending the occupation. I listen more intimately to his hesitations. We started at the wrong place. But we were engaged through the theatrical image as a catalyst, and it led us towards a different kind of encounter. And we were both transformed by its conclusion.

Notes

Prologue

1. Levinas discusses the 'face to face' relationship as foundational to ethical response and response-ability for the other throughout his writings. An introduction to this notion can be located in *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other* (1998) particularly its first two chapters: 1–38.

1 Contours and contestations

1. It is certainly significant that most of the work I detail was conducted with youth aged 16–25. According to numerous studies, adolescents (aged 12–18) develop a sense of self and social identity that tends to move towards a more closed or 'achieved' status (Makros and McCabe, 2001). Prior to developing this more closed identity, youth may be able to consciously reflect on and reformulate their social and moral identity. Because of this sense of malleability, youth work tends to be well-funded. Yet, some organizations like Combatants for Peace and Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam (discussed in Chapter 4) deliberately target adults as well as youth in order to sustain long-term political mobilizations.
2. While mainly Eastern Orthodox Christian 'Serbs' live in Serbia, and mostly Roman Catholic 'Croats' inhabit Croatia (with significant exceptions), Bosnia-Herzegovina is home to Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Muslim, as well as Jewish and Roma (Gypsy) inhabitants. This delineation is complicated by the fact that while ethnonational identification remained strong in some areas, few citizens of former Yugoslavia actively practiced their religions. Frequent intermarriage also blurs boundaries of identity. Bosnians, Serbians, and Croats all speak basically the same language, formerly known as Serbo-Croatian now referred to as 'Croatian', 'Bosnian', 'Serbian', or (less frequently) 'Serbo-Croatian' depending on self-identified national or multinational affiliations.
3. 'Četniks' refers to royalist Serbian forces that massacred Muslim and Croatian citizens, as well as Serb partisan forces, during World War II. This renaming of the present-day nationalist Serb forces suggests the tie of the present moment to the historical past and renders the conflict less of a contemporary political manipulation than a historical necessity.
4. In *Banal Nationalism*, Michael Billig proposes that 'from the perspective of Paris, London or Washington, places such as Moldova, Bosnia and Ukraine are peripherally placed on the edge of Europe' (1995: 5).
5. Seeds of Peace is a US organization founded in 1993 to address the Middle East conflict by bringing together Arab and Israeli youth to a summer camp in Maine for three-week sessions. In the late 1990s, Seeds of Peace expanded its mandate to work with South Asian, Cypriot, and Balkan youth, with encouragement

and support from the US State Department. Year-round follow-up programs run by US and local staff now exist in Mumbai (India), Lahore (Pakistan), Jerusalem, and Ramallah in the West Bank. In the Balkan program, Seeds of Peace collaborated with local youth organizations and debate societies to select participants from various socioeconomic and ethnoreligious backgrounds. I offer further details and critiques of the organization later in Chapter 1 and in Chapter 4.

6. Some of the more incisive studies of Yugoslavia's break up include Ali and Lifschultz, 1993; Glenny, 1994; Gutman, 1993; Maas, 1996; Malcolm, 1994; Sells, 1996; and Silber and Little, 1997. Most conclude that Slobodan Milošević manipulated Serbian national sentiment to gain and hold onto political power. Historical memories of Serb massacres by the Croatian fascist Ustaša in the early 1940s fueled Serbian nationalist fear. At the same time, political elites in Croatia stoked national sentiment proclaiming Croatia the 'land of the Croats', banning the Cyrillic alphabet from official documents, and adding fascist Ustaša insignia to the Croatian flag. Iraj Hashi adds a historical and economic dimension to his discussion of the conflict (1993). According to the above sources, the fact that Serb officers predominated in the Yugoslav National Army contributed to perceptions that JNA attacks on other republics were Serb led.
7. Jonathan Glover cites an evocative passage in *Humanity* from Milošević's infamous 1989 speech to Kosovar Serbs in which Milošević links land, destiny, ancestry, and national character to mobilize the Serbs (1999: 125).
8. I intentionally use the Albanian inflected signifiers for these regions. I also refer to the Serb-preferred modifier 'Kosovo' rather than 'Kosovar', a relatively new construction grounded in the ongoing movement towards further ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differentiation from Albanians.
9. Though most facilitation or encounter theory does not cite Jürgen Habermas, much of it aligns with his concepts of 'communicative action' (1985), which assumes a goal of mutual understanding in discourse situations through rationality. Habermas adds that the neoliberal market-driven state and commercial mass media has weakened communicative competence and participatory democracy.
10. Lazarus notes, 'In documentary films, post-intervention surveys and impact evaluations, the majority of participants have indeed described their initial experiences as positive and often transformative' (2007a: 6). For descriptions of affective and cognitive changes engendered by dialogical encounters, Lazarus points to studies conducted by Mohammed Abu Nimer (1999) and Berenike Carstarphen (2003).
11. Many New England-based camps, including the Seeds of Peace Powhatan site, are named for indigenous tribes and have included incidents of 'playing Indian'. For more on this phenomenon see Deloria (1998).
12. Asleh's killing remains contentious among some Seeds of Peace staff who feel that organizational spokespeople did not adequately condemn the act as unjustified murder. The Israeli state's Or Commission investigation into Asleh's death closed in 2008 without finding any individual at fault for his death. A number of Israeli Seeds of Peace graduates continue to unite around this felt injustice.

13. In his 1962 essay 'Commitment', Theodor Adorno both calls for and cautions against representations of suffering. He asserts that while artistic representation can resist the forgetting of historical traumas, it also runs the risk of turning suffering into an object for consumption.
14. Gay Cima participated with me in a stimulating roundtable on empathy and performance at the 2007 Association for Theatre in Higher Education conference along with John Fletcher, Rhonda Blair, Linda Kintz, and Anne-Liese Fox.
15. According to most statistics these include about 200,000 civilians killed, 1.3 million refugees, and 1 million internally displaced (International, 1998).
16. I do briefly discuss the work of the Freedom Theatre of Jenin in Chapter 5 as a counter to Chen Alon's polarization praxis.

2 Balkan Bridges: Re-Membering Mostar (1995–2000)

1. I had originally attached ethnoreligious identities to Ana and Meša, but when I shared these with Meša, he asked me to remove them. 'Those definitions are not for me, they never were. Those definitions are used for wars to start. And me, I am just a guy who writes poetry; my land is wherever is welcoming hand' (Begić, 2008).
2. After working in Varaždin, my colleague Jessie and I offered photographs of our work to Reuters who refused to print them. 'We wanted something interesting', the editor informed us, handing the photos of youth playing back to us.
3. All additional quotes in this section are from McElvany's 1996 report on the performance.
4. Though mainly Muslims and Croats lived in Mostar at this time, a few Serbians remained and one participated in the camp performances.
5. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), Michel de Certeau proposes a distinction between tactical resistances and more authoritative strategies in analyzing the relationship of behavior to power and place. Strategies to define (or redefine) Mostar include the printing of city maps, the establishment of a postal service and its limits, and the renaming of city streets. Strategic power is bound by its very visibility, as in order to function effectively, it must be easily perceived. Tactics, in contrast, depend on time, on subjects without a 'proper' place recognizing opportunities for interventions to play in the foundations of visible power, to walk a different path from that which is formally laid out.
6. Co-director Geoff Sobelle had recently completed a year's study in Paris with the Jacques LeCoq Institute concentrating on commedia-style physical theatre and mask work.
7. The psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan (1986: 744–6) asserts that metonymy inherently implies a veering from signification, allowing for a displacement rather than replacement of meaning. In a system of power that relies on the production of signs, the ability to manipulate language becomes a key to discerning how power operates.
8. Co-director Geoff Sobelle, originally from west Los Angeles, commented on the parallel between Mostar and Los Angeles. Though there are no border guards, residents from east and west LA rarely mix.

9. Before the war, residents of Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia spoke regional dialects of the language then known as 'Serbo-Croatian'. After the territories descended into war, each region began redefining its language as 'Serbian', 'Croatian', or 'Bosnian', often fetishizing minor differences among them.

3 Between the Lines: Staging 'the Balkans' through Berlin (2001)

1. 'Between the Lines' signals this chapter's title, 'Between-the-Lines' refers to Community Arts Berlin's multi-year project, and '*Between the Lines*' specifically references the performance installation at the HKW.
2. Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) designed the sneaker as part of the exhibition Jamaica Flux, organized by the Jamaica [Queens] Center for Arts and Culture. CUP installed the Nike Terminator hightops with embedded screen in a Sneaker Mart near the Arts Center. CUP generates artistic projects with youth that promote civic engagement. According to their website, art helps to activate and sharpen the gaze of youth guiding them to first see and then to change the city in which they live (<http://anothercupdevelopment.org>).
3. While encouraging visitors to 'New York' to read the urban space as a text, the House of World Cultures is itself situated within a palimpsest of spatialized political narratives in Berlin. The HKW is located in the former Congress Hall – a gift from the United States in 1967 constructed at the height of the Cold War. Marked by an oddly-shaped sweeping roof, known colloquially as 'Kennedy's Smile', the Hall was deliberately built near the city's Soviet sector with views of the Berlin Wall and the then largely unused Reichstag parliament building.
4. As of 2007 the EU had accepted Romania and Bulgaria as Member States. FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and Croatia are currently candidate countries.
5. Robert Schuman introduced the term 'supranationalism' in 1951 as a part of the Schuman Plan that laid the foundation for economic cooperation among the six founder states of the European Community (France, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg). The term as defined by Schuman invokes a decision-making body that transcends the sovereignty of member states, as the European Parliament does within the EU, though the EU functions as an intergovernmental as well as supranational organization.
6. Both Balibar and Reinelt locate 'Europe' as a site of struggle concerned with shoring up human rights, but also maintaining exclusionary borders. In 'World Borders, Political Borders', Balibar discusses the broad notion of a 'Europe possible' that would acknowledge the conceptual and geographic Balkans as central rather than peripheral to this possibility. In 'Performing Europe', Reinelt suggests that a discursive theatre can play a role in determining Europe's future by locating its problematics and imagining its possibilities, operating to constitute rather than merely to reflect the 'New Europe' (2001: 367).
7. Karen Till's geoethnographic study *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (2005) looks at how German nationalism and modernity has been staged, represented, and contested in Berlin, particularly through city planning and marketing campaigns in the late 1990s. The campaigns locate the 'new'

differentially, as a return to a particular historic past, or vision of a selectively defined cosmopolitan future. Remnants of other narratives additionally haunt both discursive formations. In one fascinating anecdote reminiscent of how Mostar operates as a canvas for written dissent, Till discusses how Berliners participate in an ongoing dialogue about how to memorialize the past, writing notes to each other on a fence marking the site of a Holocaust Memorial. 'The discussion IS a memorial!' asserts one anonymous writer (2005: 3).

8. Till cites an unnamed spokesperson for Partners for Berlin, the marketing company contracted to promote the city. The spokesperson muses about Berlin's 'cosmopolitanism...as well as the market because of its proximity to Eastern Europe. Berlin [has] changed its geographical location, from the margins to the center of Europe' (2005: 4).
9. In addition to Schuman's definition cited above, 'supranational' also implies a more capacious 'European' citizenship, defined within EU documents in terms of mobility (of people, goods, and services), human rights, peace, and security. The EU website trumpets the seeming connection between free markets and peace, by claiming that the Union ensures that no wars have broken out among Member States in the past 60 years (Europa). A web primer on EU citizenship additionally references the need for a 'feeling of belonging' and the existence of symbols such as the flag, the Euro currency, the anthem Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' and the celebration of Europe Day (A Citizen's Europe). References to affect, symbols, commemorative ceremonies, common currency, market freedom, security, and social relationships prevail over discussions of policy participation, evoking the terms of ethnic nationalism and neoliberalism more than participatory democracy.
10. All interview comments in this paragraph are from a digital archive of the Rovinj seminar produced in 2001.
11. In an article exploring the relationship of citizenship to performance (2008), John Fletcher synthesizes various studies of citizenship that establish ties to collective identification and to responsibility to that collective.
12. Subsequent quotations in this section are from the Croatia Report unless otherwise indicated.
13. All subsequent quotes from the Macedonia Report unless otherwise indicated.
14. Social psychologist Vamik Volkan asserts that in societies experiencing conflict, identity becomes more polarized and often regresses to negative stereotypes of the outgroup (1997).
15. In 'Boutique Multiculturalism' (1997), Stanley Fish locates this masking as the central contradiction of liberal democracies.
16. The discovery about the gap in the young Macedonian woman's spatial knowledge echoes Zygmunt Bauman's proposals about cognitive space in *Postmodern Ethics*: 'If cognitive space could be projected upon the city map, or upon the map of a country or the modern world as a whole, it would take the shape of an archipelago, rather than a circle or any other compact and continuous figure' (1993: 158).
17. While direct, physical violence is most easily perceived, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1985) identifies 'symbolic violence' as acts of cultural domination.

John Galtung (1969) locates 'structural violence' as the systemic repression or exclusion of social groups.

18. The evaluation included standardized as well as more open-ended questions. Questions that focused on target goals such as personal awareness, stability, and responsibility were measured before and after the seminar. Satisfaction with the seminar was measured after-the-fact. The survey included several statements and asked the participants to rate their (dis)agreement on a scale from one to four ('not at all true' to 'exactly true'). To measure internal consistency of responses, statements were framed positively and negatively at a different point in the survey (e.g., 'the seminars did not know what they were talking about' and 'the seminar leaders were highly qualified'). Julius-McElvany felt that results would have been strengthened with more consistent completion of a longer-term follow-up survey.
19. I thank John Fletcher for his commentary and suggestions here, particularly for reminding me of the significance of Fish's arguments in relation to my own.
20. In 'Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship', Carol Duncan proposes that mainstream museums serve as 'fixtures of a well-furnished state' where attendance rehearses a ritual of 'political virtue and national identity' figuring the visitor as a member of the 'civilized community of modern, liberal nations' (1991: 88–9). As a cultural center staging difference, the HKW does not function as an art historical museum in Duncan's terms. But in both its inaugural years and later reconfiguration, the HKW seems to imagine visitors as well-educated, 'cosmopolitans' in the more Kantian sense of 'citizens of the world'.
21. Michael Baxandall elaborates on the 'museum set' in 'Exhibiting Intentions' (1991).
22. For more on how the viewer's gaze oscillates between difference and similarity, see 'The Museum as a way of Seeing' (Alpers, 1991).
23. Dean MacCannell introduces the paradoxical notion of 'staged authenticity' in his 1973 article on events constructed for the tourist gaze. For elaborations on performing culture see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1991).
24. A team of three directors, including myself, helped to organize the installation pieces and shape the 30-minute production; however, the youth generated all of the performance work.
25. In *Imagined Community* Benedict Anderson proposes that the emergence of print media helped individuals to imagine themselves as 'a people' (1991). Jürgen Habermas adds that commercial mass media eventually transformed a critical public into passive consumers of information (1989 [1962]).

4 Border Zones: Theatrical Mobilizations of 'the Middle East' (2004–2008)

1. As of this writing in 2008, Israel's state borders remain officially undetermined. Israel claims sovereignty over approximately 78 percent of the territory of what was, after World War I, British Mandatory Palestine. In 1947, a United Nations General Assembly Declaration divided the land into Arab (45 percent) and Jewish (55 percent) states, a declaration rejected by the Arab

states and leading to the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, which divided territory into Israel (78 percent), Gaza under Egyptian administration, and West Bank/East Jerusalem annexed to Jordan. In 1967 Israel established military control over 100 percent of British Mandatory Palestine, after which it formally annexed East Jerusalem and began building Jewish settlements in the newly conquered territories, but denying citizenship to residents therein. Under the 1990s Oslo Accords, Israel worked with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to establish the quasi-sovereign Palestinian National Authority (PNA) wielding various degrees of civil authority over territorially discontinuous Palestinian populated areas. After the second Al Aqsa intifada in 2000, Israel initiated a separation policy, unilaterally withdrawing troops from Gaza in 2005, but retaining effective control of borders. Around this period, Israel began applying a more restrictive checkpoint and permit regime within and around the West Bank, and building a separation barrier.

Territorial borders remains a major negotiating point in Middle East peace agreements, alongside security, which most Israeli citizens believe is preserved by the barrier and by checkpoints. The majority of these checkpoints are, however, located within the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs lists 47 permanent checkpoints within the West Bank and 33 ‘last inspection points’ between Israel and the West Bank (OCHA). There are hundreds of more informal ‘flying checkpoints’ and barriers constructed in an ad hoc manner by the IDF. Thanks to international relations scholar Ned Lazarus for sharing his thoughts on much of the above information.

2. In some ways there is no ‘Israeli’ nationality. Until a few years ago, Israeli identification cards distinguished between Jewish and Arab citizens, signaling distinct supranational identities that materialize in differences in property rights and educational resources (Tekiner, 1999). This distinction nationalizes Jews as a cultural, linguistic, and ethnic category rather than a purely religious one. According to a 2006 social survey on religion in Israel, *Dat Be’Israel*, about half the Jewish citizens of Israel identify as secular. Israeli ID cards do not note religious distinctions among Arab citizens, though there is a separate category for Druze who have served in the IDF since 1962. ‘Arabs’ in Israel include those who identify with, but don’t always actively practice, the religions of Christianity and Islam. In contrast to this system of citizenship designation, Israeli-issued identity cards in the Occupied Territories designate Palestinians by place of birth.
3. The Law of Return allows any Jewish individual to immigrate and attain Israeli citizenship. Whether or not that individual has done so, they are welcome through the Te’nim Passage to Israel, as are Jewish settlers living in the West Bank. All Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories are prohibited from passing without an Israeli-issued permit. Permits can be denied on security grounds (Machsom Watch). According to the legalities implied by the posted sign, as a non-Jewish, non-resident of Israel I should not have been allowed through the Passage.
4. In an article for *Ha’aretz* on the hidden benefits of settlement, Israeli journalist, Amira Hass, estimates that there are about 400,000 settlers in the West Bank (though most estimates are lower). According to Hass, their presence not only signifies control over territory, but a less visible

discourse of class consciousness, and a way of grappling with the gradual destruction of the welfare state, as most settlement housing is subsidized by the Israeli state. Hass cites the hidden benefits of settlement to all Israelis, including control over land and water resources, benefits to construction companies and the security industry, and the building of bypass roads that figure modern middle-class consciousness.

5. In a follow-up email Alon asserts that the 'Jewish Lane' is not legally marked, but is spatially practiced. 'The lane is for Jews: only Jews are crossing. Not Arabs of any kind. Not Palestinians. Not Arab Israelis. Not even one time I crossed, out of dozens that the soldier didn't ask. But it is not written anywhere that they can't pass' (2008b).
6. While Arab/Palestinian citizens of Israel don't serve in the Israeli Defense Force, under an agreement between the Israeli state and traditional religious authorities in the community, service in the IDF is compulsory for Druze males. Druze do not identify as Palestinian and tend to claim loyalty to whatever state they live in. Most serve in the borders' police units because they speak Arabic.
7. In his revisionist study *Righteous Victims* (2001), Israeli historian Benny Morris points out that there is also an asymmetrical focus on Israel in scholarly treatments of the conflict. This is due, in part, to the fact that Israeli archives are more open to researchers. I recognize this discrepancy in my own fieldwork. As I do not speak Hebrew or Arabic, more of my contacts in the region are Ashkenazi Jewish Israelis, intellectual and cultural elites who travel with greater ease, and tend to speak more fluent English than Palestinians. As a US citizen, it is also easier for me to travel within the boundaries of 1948 Israel than within the Occupied Territories, particularly Gaza, where I have never been.
8. According to Robert David Sack's theory of territoriality (1986), control of land is often obfuscated by strategies of depersonalization.
9. Although the Israeli state and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) both sustain and profit from this separation discourse, it ultimately elides the internal complexities that define the conflict, as well as the alliances forged by a number of under-recognized grassroots movements. Just Vision, a non-profit coalition run by four Jewish and Arab women, documents individuals and coalition projects working for a just solution to the conflict (www.justvision.org).
10. For several decades Israeli community theatre has drawn attention to marginalized populations within the country, particularly women and Mizrahi Jews (Lev-Aladgem, 2003; 2006). Shifra Schonmann (1996) writes about a number of Arab-Jewish theatre projects, as does Ellen Kaplan (2005), who focuses on Peace Child Israel and the US-based City of Peace. Hala Nassar (2006) details the robustness of Palestinian protest theatre in 'Stories from under Occupation: Performing the Palestinian Experience.' Juliano Mer Khamis runs the Freedom Theatre of Jenin, discussed in Chapter 5. Additionally, several coalitional protest groups such as the Rebel Clown Army, and *Kvisa Shchora* (Dirty Laundry) adopt theatrical tactics. These various theatrical forms deploy many of the goals enunciated by James Thompson and Richard Schechner in their essay on 'social theatre' (2004), including testimony and accusation (Israeli community theatre,

Palestinian stories under occupation), action (protest groups), alleviation and entertainment (Jenin Freedom Theatre). Thompson and Schechner do not discuss terminology for social theatre as a site of encounter between groups in conflict.

11. The politics of naming identity in the region are fraught. Unless drawing on the particular rhetoric of organizations I write about, I distinguish between the Israeli state and its multiethnic citizens. I refer to secular and religious 'Jewish' Israelis, recognizing the term as an ethnic category, while respecting where the youth I work with prefer to emphasize their 'Israeli' rather than 'Jewish' identity. Dependent upon context and self-identification, I refer to Arab, Palestinian or Arab/Palestinian citizens of Israel. 'Palestinian' mainly signifies residents of the Occupied Territories, though it sometimes includes self-identified Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as members of the Palestinian diaspora. These complexities point towards the troubling binarization of the conflict as one that opposes 'Israelis' and 'Palestinians' as nations, collapsing internal complexities while framing the conflict in terms of 'recognition' rather than through 'redistribution' and control of resources. See Alex Honneth and Nancy Fraser (2003) for more details about this distinction.
12. Vamik D. Volkan proposes that nations generate collective attachments through the construction of social memory, particularly around what he terms 'chosen glories' and 'chosen traumas' (1999: 37). For Jewish Israelis, a defining national trauma is the Holocaust, in which an estimated six million European Jews were systemically slaughtered. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 celebrates the creation of a self-determined safe state for Jews everywhere. This central trauma and celebration tends to 'forget' those who already lived in the territory. Those who have come to define themselves as Palestinian view the establishment of the State of Israel as *Al Naqba*, a catastrophe that forced them from their land, thus generating a master narrative of dispossession (Said, 1994). Palestinians celebrate Land Day as a way to sustain attachments to territory. The Palestinian narrative and educational system tends to downplay or erase the traumatic importance of the Holocaust to Jewish Israelis. These common narratives are particularly important in linking those who reside in Israel and the Occupied Territories to diasporic Jews and Palestinians.
13. Scholars have written extensively about the construction of Israeli and Palestinian national narratives, and their often oppositional relation to each other (Khalidi, 1997, 2007; Kimmerling, 2001; Lerner, 2003; Rotberg, 2006). Most situate the formation of these national identities in the late nineteenth century, when Zionism emerged from within Europe as one, largely secular-socialist, political strand of Judaism, and when 'Palestinians' began to define themselves in opposition to Ottoman rulers. As Rashid Khalidi argues, the failure of pan-Arab nationalism, and lack of support from Arab-controlled governments, also contributed to the forging of a distinct Palestinian identity. However, the ongoing Israeli occupation, with its daily reminders of constraint, humiliation, and control, currently serves as the most formative generator of Palestinian national identity (Khalidi, 2007). In addition to scholarship about oppositional identity construction, historians Paul Scham, Walid Salem, and Benjamin Pogrund have edited a collection of *Shared Histories* (2005).

14. The terminology of 'separation barrier', favored by the Israeli political action group B'Tselem (2004), acknowledges the functionality of what many Israelis term a 'security fence' and what Palestinians tend to refer to as an 'apartheid' or 'annexation' wall. In some places, the barrier seems more like an electrified fence, while in others it is inarguably a meters-high wall. The barrier runs along the pre-1967 border, but also cuts into Palestinian farmlands, even surrounding some cities like Qalquilya. Ricardo Levins Morales suggests that the circuitous route of the wall makes sense only when 'superimposed on a map of aquifers that underlie the territories' (2007: 17).
15. Palestinians, not surprisingly, view the 1967 War quite differently. In another example of oppositional identity construction, while Israelis celebrate their Independence Day Palestinians mark *Al Naqba*, the 'Catastrophe' of Palestinian exodus linked to Israel's founding in 1948.
16. Like almost all Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the military tower is built high to facilitate panoptical surveillance. Building settlements atop hills also allows for control of the valuable resource of water tables in a desert climate.
17. In a talk at the University of Minnesota, Israeli anthropologist Smadar Lavie complicated this binary, noting that working-class Mizrahi Jews from the Middle East experience less mobility than many Palestinians in the diaspora.
18. Zygmunt Bauman details how estrangement is often paradoxically generated through an anxious nostalgia for community produced through exclusions – the construction, for example, of 'gated communities' laden with outward-focused surveillance technology (2001: 3). Bauman also notes that the freedom sacrificed in the name of security tends to be 'other people's' (2001: 20).
19. Vamik D. Volkan studies the psychology of large groups, particularly those in antagonistic relations with one another. He notes how threats to the group are perceived as individual wounds inducing 'collective responses of anxiety and dread' (1999: 33). This polarized thinking can be encouraged by nationalistic leaders who play on group antipathy, generating even more fear and insecurity to sustain their power.
20. Tim Jon Semmerling details how the procedure of 'othering' or Orientalizing Arabs operates through visual culture in both Israel and Palestine (2004).
21. Palestinian citizens of Israel refer to those Arabs who remained in their villages or in mixed cities like Haifa or Ramle during the 1948 war. While their mobility was initially closely controlled, after 1967 they became absorbed by the Israeli state. Seeds of Peace has had difficulties negotiating how to acknowledge Arab/Palestinian difference within Israeli citizenship, in part because the organization works closely with the Israeli Ministry of Education which favors a focus on Israeli citizenship rather than Arab national identity. Arab/Palestinian Israelis within Seeds speak of difficulties being recognized by Jewish Israelis. One noted to me that 'they try to minimize our place in their consciousness.'
22. For more on the politics of language, see Halabi and Zak (2000). Most Palestinians living in Israel speak Hebrew while most Jewish Israelis do not speak Arabic. Thus Hebrew often becomes the de facto 'common' language of encounter unless this practice is actively resisted. School for Peace published its 2000 anthology in both Hebrew and Arabic.

23. Phillip Hammack writes about the ways that identities accrue and polarize in conflict situations and how coexistence encounters impact life narratives allowing for the transcendence of polarized identities. Hammack particularly addresses the impact of globalization and the dominance of Western culture (such as the adoption of a 'common' English language) in constructing bicultural or hybrid narratives (2006: 326).
24. 'Community', a term that often connotes a more intimate social group in a US context, was immediately translated by the Seeds youth into a larger ethnonational group framework.
25. Boal prefers to avoid speaking in order to place focus on the images; I allowed this option because of the limited time we had to build a common theatrical vocabulary.
26. Phillip Hammack upholds these findings (2006); the typical narrative of Palestinian youth marks emergent political consciousness while Israeli life narratives tend to address more personal events 'common to adolescence in postindustrial societies' (340). Haggith Gor Ziv and Rela Mazali offer a critical political reading of the tendencies for Israelis to focus on interpersonal dynamics proposing that as the Israeli state had sponsored most 1990s encounter groups they tended to favor models that preserved the status quo, upholding 'a tolerant democratic image of Israel while failing to effect any far-reaching structural, social change' (1998: 9).
27. When he heard Arab/Palestinian Israelis referred to as a 'bridge' in the region, my colleague, a self-identified Palestinian Israeli facilitator and poet, wondered whether they were 'a bridge to connect or to be walked on'. Many Arab/Palestinians living in Israel wrestle with the fact that they are materially 'better-off' than those living in the West Bank or in Gaza while feeling that this inequity fuels the conflict.
28. Palestinian identity is narrowly tied to place and territory, especially for the diaspora. Palestinians hold onto deeds, keys, and a sense of identity rooted in villages that they have never seen, and that sometimes no longer exist other than in memory. For Jews living outside of Israel, attachment to territory and to the state of Israel can secure a sense of collective identity in the face of assimilation when religious practice is waning and intermarriage (such as my own) is on the rise. Israel can become a surrogate for collective Jewish identity. For both peoples, the diaspora voices attachments to the land as a mythic, as well as material, holder of collective identity. Indeed, the most vocal member of the Palestinian group had been educated in the United States and held American citizenship.
29. Boal insists that the projections and analyses of an image come from its witnesses, arguing that verbal explication causes the images to lose their potency and potential for multiplicity. I propose that this constraint makes sense in the context of homogenous groups, where individual projections work together to forge social rather than idiosyncratic meanings. In more heterogeneous circumstances, letting the image producers speak can highlight differences in how distinct groups decode the same image.
30. As many of my Palestinian colleagues, and some Palestinian scholars (Ashrawi, 2007; Khalidi, 1997, 2007) have publicly acknowledged, the Palestinian Authority is racked by corruption and cronyism. Intriguingly, after their return from Arab villages, the Arab/Palestinian Israeli Seeds

youth presented a more nuanced portrait of their community. They spoke of the internal complexity of the region, wracked by Israeli government neglect as well as self-imposed segregation and internal corruption.

31. In *Participatory Democracy* (2003), America Vera-Zavala notes that popular civic committees, such as *lijan sh'biya* initiated during the first intifada in the 1980s, have gone unsupported by the Palestinian Authority. During a time when there was no Palestinian state authority, the committees provided civil services like health and education, redistributed resources, and resolved disputes. According to Vera-Zavala, the popular committees proved a threat to both Israeli authority and to the PLO and had a harder time gaining traction in the second intifada.
32. There are many internal Israeli dissenters to state policy. Human rights groups like B'Tselem and MACHSOM Watch monitor their government's behavior and do what they can to publicize and stop what they see as wrong.
33. US coverage tends not to foreground the complexity of events in the Middle East, including Palestinian nonviolent activism and Israeli civic dissent. While it is difficult to accurately assess media bias, Israelis and Palestinians tend to agree that US media generally favors Israel while European media biases towards Palestinians. Israeli media tends to be more self-critical than Arab media.
34. For many Palestinian political prisoners, including al-Jundi, incarceration served as education and is sometimes referred to as the University of the Occupation. Al-Jundi read voraciously in Israeli prison, including the works of Gandhi, Dostoevsky, and Mandela.
35. I have personally heard such sentiments expressed by representatives of the Israeli Ministry of Education over the several years that I worked as a facilitator at Seeds of Peace. In her dissertation, Ahsiya Posner details the dynamics of Seeds of Peace's close relationship with the Israeli Ministry (2006: 212–15).
36. Social identity theory, particularly the work of Henri Tajfel (1982; Tajfel and Turner, 1979), significantly informs School for Peace methods. Tajfel's studies posit that prejudice is natural rather than aberrant and rooted in collective feeling and memory.
37. In their article detailing the School for Peace approach, Halabi and Sonnenschein assert 'Conceptions and beliefs on which a person's identity and behavior are constructed are stable and deep-seated ... Thus we aspire in the encounter to enable the participants to behave freely, as closely as possible in line with reality, so that through this behavior they can examine and comprehend their deeply held conceptions and attempt to deal with them.' (2000: 51).
38. The tendency for the Israelis to situate themselves as individuals concerned with interpersonal encounters emerged even in opening remarks. Israelis tended to talk about teachers, philosophers, and literature. Palestinians spoke about the conditions of the occupation.
39. Halabi and Sonnenschein report that the Arab group accepts their approach while the Jewish group tends to oppose it, demanding to be treated as individuals, believing that 'the racist Jews are elsewhere' (2000: 53).
40. I witnessed Viewpoints theatre on archival video footage from performances at an Israeli high school in 2004. All references to Israeli students' responses

to Viewpoints are from this archival video. I also attended live performances in Minneapolis at the Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed conference in June 2007, and in El Khader, a suburb of Bethlehem, in November 2007.

41. Personal interview conducted with the author. All citations from Turkiyye are from this interview unless otherwise noted.
42. See Hammack (2006) for more on identity polarization and transcendence through examination of Israeli and Palestinian adolescent life stories in a coexistence setting.
43. See Dwyer (2005) and Babbage (2004) for a critique and contextualization of Boal's ideas about Aristotle.
44. In a personal email Alon adds, 'the kids face, usually for the first time, the fact that they don't know anything about the situation, that the "facts" which are provided by the media are lacking a lot of information, under an optimistic interpretation, and full of lies and manipulated, under the worst interpretation' (2007b).
45. This attitude was repeated in a Viewpoints show performed for a mixed audience of Israeli and Palestinian activists and echoes Phillip Hammack's findings. Palestinian youth in Hammack's sample group tended to express a lack of agency in their capacity to transform the conflict. 'What can I do? I'm just a kid... This conflict is out of our hands; it's controlled by people way beyond me' (2006: 353).
46. Alon explains Mizrachim political affiliation with right-wing parties. 'There were hardly Ashkenazi left wing people who participated in the first Mizrahi uprising, the black panther's struggle in the fifties. The accusation of the Mizrachim was always: "the Ashkenazim love Arabs more than they love Mizrahi Jews." And in fact, the tragedy was that they were right' (2008b).
47. According to Vamik D. Volkan (1999) and other studies that he cites, in situations of stress and perceived threat, individuals tend to idealize their own group and demonize others.
48. Israeli activist and scholar Tanya Reinhardt asserts that when Palestinians are accused of being a collaborator, he or she is isolated from the community. She argues that this is an oft-repeated strategy of the Palestinian Authority against perceived internal opponents (2006: 193).
49. To indicate the development of personal relations within the group I use the first names of participants in this section, with their permission.
50. While I was still in Israel a news report on Idan's theatre project showed images of Vishinski's Israeli soldier son and not of Bassam's Palestinian daughter. Aramin posted a public letter to the station about this imbalance:

I want to ask you, when the Israeli media will have the courage to defend the humanity of the Palestinian children as children, equal to the Israeli children... I hope that you will change your mind one day, and understand that it's our responsibility to fight against the occupation and the slavery. Together we must put an end to our suffering.

(2008)

51. Benford and Snow's 'Framing Processes and Social Movements' reviews frame analysis as a central dynamic in understanding social movements.

They suggest that the concept of 'frame', derived from Erving Goffman (1974), helps individuals to select and render events meaningful in order to guide actions (2000: 614).

52. In *Lihish' tah'weel* Ricardo Levins Morales tells the story of Eqbal Ahmad, a veteran of the Algerian revolution. Speaking to members of the PLO in 1968, Ahmad suggested that the principle task of a liberation movement – whether armed or not – was to 'out-legitimize' its opponent through dramatizing the colonizing society's central contradictions until that society could no longer bear the strain (2007: 6).
53. In Israel, college-age kids walk the streets (in or out of uniform) with guns while armed security guards with metal detectors stand at the entrance to most eating and drinking establishments. In Palestine, public spectacles and posters memorialize conflict-related deaths, including those of suicide bombers.

5 Facilitation Praxis: Four Modes of Encounter

1. For Jewish Israelis, refusing to serve in the IDF involves a lengthy court process and often social shunning. As Seeds of Peace works with state governments, the organization does not condone refusal to serve in the army.
2. Levinas develops the idea of this ethical 'regard' in several works, particularly in *Entre Nous: Thinking of the Other* (1998). 'Regard' sustains a double meaning of looking at and holding in respect, alluding to the metaphor of the face and of face-to-face relationships that Levinas evokes in conjuring an ethics of relational response to, and responsibility for, the other.
3. In a digital interview produced by the Freedom Theatre (2008b), Mer Khamis discusses the original project 'Care and Learning' as an alternative educational model for a population whose school systems had been destroyed by the Israeli occupation.
4. As posited by Henry Louis Gates in *The Signifyin(g) Monkey*, Exu operates as a hermeneutic rather than a guide, one that teaches others to interpret rather than positing fixed meanings (1988).
5. Maya Talmon-Chvaicer complicates this assumed genealogy in 'Verbal and Non-Verbal Memory in Capoeira' (2004).
6. Zygmunt Bauman discusses the relationship between *communitas* and *societas* in greater depth in *Postmodern Ethics* (1993: 143).
7. Though their work is not theatrically based, Orli Fridman and Ziad Abu Rish cite the value of comparative conflict analysis between the Balkans and Middle East. In a conference presentation on their work with Palestinians and Israelis in Serbia, they discuss the particular importance of analyzing Europe's role in figuring each conflict scenario, arguing that through the Holocaust, Europe plays a powerful role in structuring the competing narratives and collective memories of Palestinians and Jews. They contrast this 'centering' role with a more 'peripheral' Europe in regards to genocide in Srebrenica. This comparison of genocidal tragedies allowed their youth group to become more reflexive about competition over victimization and to struggle towards breaking through this competition (2008).

8. In an opinion piece following the arrest of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić, Aleksander Hemon muses on Karadžić's terrifying and galvanizing 1991 speech to the Bosnian parliament. He refers to the speech as a performance, one directed towards a 'patriotic' Serb audience, inspiring them to sacrifice and murder by drawing on the tropes of orally performed Serbian epic poetry (2008).
9. Laura Edmondson ponders the violence that tales of theatrical transformation can enact (2007). She cites Michael Taussig's reflections on 'the [narrative] excess that can't be assimilated' (2006: viii), prompting reflections on the writer's responsibility to that excess.

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